

2022

Talent Acquisition Technology

BUYER'S GUIDE

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Authored By:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its third edition, this report is the definitive guide for companies looking to navigate the talent acquisition (TA) technology landscape and improve the way they evaluate providers. It serves as a resource for anyone interested in learning more about the trends impacting technology and the requirements critical to making decisions. It is designed to help companies look at the big picture of technology and plan for the next 12 to 18 months.

Organizations need to evaluate providers based on a new set of criteria that encourages partnership and collaboration between the business and the solutions. Today, company culture, customer support, and partnership are a critical part of the buyer's journey and a key differentiator when evaluating solutions.

The Aptitude Research Talent Acquisition Buyer's Guide from 2019 focused on the SMB market and The Talent Acquisition Buyer's Guide from 2021 focused on the Enterprise market. This year's edition is designed for companies of all sizes and provides a more complete view of the talent acquisition technology landscape.

Some of the additions to this report include:



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

According to Aptitude Research, 93% of companies identified DEI as a top priority for 2022. Yet, most companies are not sure what role technology plays in reducing bias and increasing the number of diverse hires. This guide looks at how companies are reducing bias through technology and questions to ask providers.



Artificial Intelligence:

AI is one of the most misunderstood areas of talent acquisition technology. Companies are looking at capabilities to improve decision-making, but also must consider ethical AI. This report includes an overview of the role AI plays across all of talent acquisition.



Internal Mobility:

With the Great Resignation, talent acquisition is becoming more responsible for internal mobility efforts and career progression. Internal mobility is the bridge between talent acquisition and employee experience, yet companies are not always clear what role technology plays in providing fair and equitable opportunities to employees. This guide looks at the impact of internal mobility on the modern TA tech stack.



Sourcing:

As companies increase their investment in ways to identify and attract talent, sourcing is a key priority for 2022. The sourcing landscape has become increasingly complex, and companies must consider the different providers and the role of AI in sourcing. This guide looks at the key trends in sourcing and the balance of humans and technology.

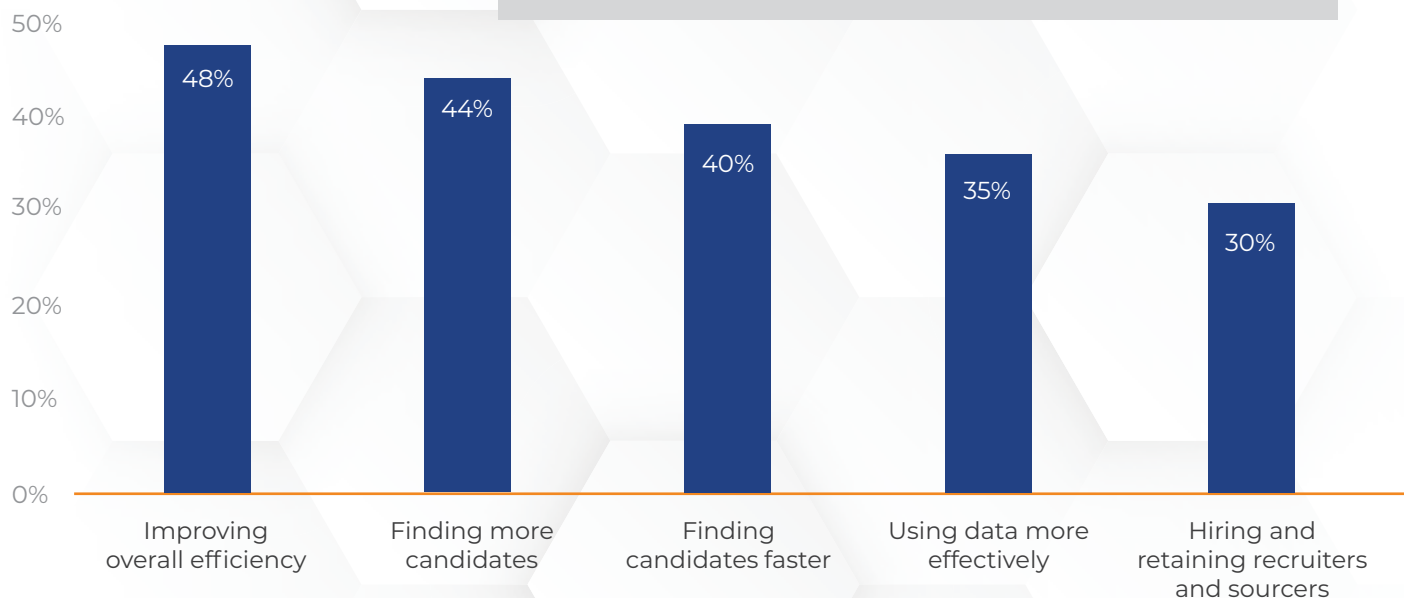
INTRODUCTION

The talent acquisition technology landscape has shifted over the past year. The labor shortage, the Great Resignation, and remote work have accelerated the demand for technology. And, companies have new providers, categories, and products to consider when attracting, recruiting, and developing talent. According to Aptitude Research, 73% of companies are increasing their investment in talent acquisition technology in 2022.

41% of companies are increasing the number of hires in 2022 and 65% of companies have high-volume needs.

Additionally, 41% of companies are increasing the number of hires in 2022 and 65% of companies have high-volume needs. Talent acquisition has never been more challenging or complex. Companies must balance speed with quality in a world where candidates' needs come first. And, for many companies, speed and quantity are the currency for success. When asked about the top priorities for 2022, companies identified efficiency, finding more candidates, and finding candidates faster as the top priorities (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: Top Talent Acquisition Priorities



Companies are prioritizing attraction (employer branding, recruitment marketing, and sourcing) to achieve these goals. By focusing on the early stages of talent acquisition, companies often run out of steam later in the process during hiring (screening, interviewing, and assessment). A negative hiring process can be devastating to the employer brand, candidate experience, and quality of hire. According to Aptitude Research, 25% of candidates are dropping off at the interview process (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Candidates Dropping Off in the Talent Acquisition Journey



As companies prepare for the next year, they must carefully consider every aspect of talent acquisition technology from recruitment marketing to onboarding. They must address the challenges and priorities influencing decision making today.

Talent acquisition success is measured by its ability to adjust to change. And, talent acquisition leaders face pressure to adopt the latest technology innovations in a short time. The goal of this Buyer's Guide is to help organizations understand the technology landscape better and make strategic decisions around their technology options. It can be used as a guide for companies at any stage of the talent acquisition buying process. This guide is divided into three sections that help companies understand the market, evaluate providers, and build a business case internally.

Understanding the Current State of the Market:

This section helps companies understand the top challenges, key drivers, modern technology stack, and ROI analysis impacting talent acquisition decisions today.

Evaluating Providers:

This section provides an in-depth look at each area of technology, including trends and requirements.

Moving Forward:

This section provides insights into communicating with key stakeholders, implementing, and adopting these systems. It also looks at what companies should consider for integration.

This guide will help organizations answer the following questions:

1

What is driving decisions on talent acquisition technology?

2

How can companies calculate the ROI of their investments in talent acquisition?

3

How can buyers gain the support of senior executives within their organization?

4

What are the key criteria for selecting talent acquisition technology?

5

What are the internal and external questions that companies should ask before selecting talent acquisition technology?

PART I:

UNDERSTANDING THE TALENT ACQUISITION TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE

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TALENT ACQUISITION TECHNOLOGY: WHAT HAS CHANGED?

The talent acquisition technology landscape has shifted over the past two years. Companies have more options to invest in solutions and the market is becoming more crowded and confusing. Four factors are influencing technology decisions today:

- **Companies are increasing their investment.** According to Aptitude Research, 62% of companies increased their investment across all areas of TA technology in 2021 and 73% of companies plan to continue to increase that investment in 2022. The demand for technology to support every area of recruitment has never been greater.
- **The landscape is more complex than ever before.** On average, companies are investing in over ten recruitment solutions and only one in two companies measure the ROI of that investment. Traditional providers are reinventing themselves and new providers are entering the market every month. Navigating the complexity of this market is a challenge for even the most sophisticated buyer.
- **The ATS is not enough.** The modern talent acquisition system is more than a workflow or a traditional ATS. It includes recruitment marketing, CRM, onboarding, and internal mobility. Many providers have enhanced their interview management capabilities, have dabbled with AI matching, and have made commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The modern talent acquisition system is an end-to-end platform that supports attracting, recruiting, and hiring talent.
- **AI is here to stay.** AI is not a passing trend in talent acquisition technology. It is changing the way work is done and influencing technology decisions. According to Aptitude Research, 43% of companies are investing in AI to support talent acquisition today. The challenge with AI is that it is often misunderstood by companies and misused by solution providers.

The increased focus on talent acquisition technology is also shining a light on some gaps in the current landscape including high-volume hiring and recruiter experience.

HIGH-VOLUME RECRUITMENT



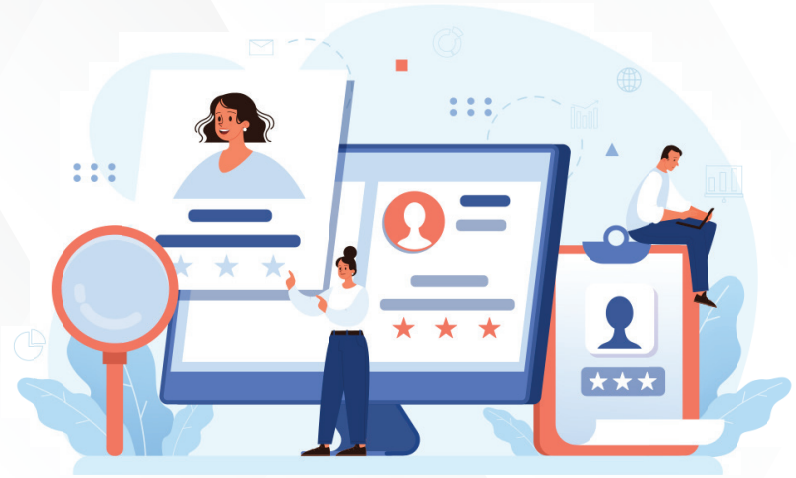
Traditional recruitment technology and applicant tracking systems (ATS) are not designed for high-volume candidates. They do not always offer the capabilities to support companies filling large positions. One strategy that companies should consider is investing in technology solutions designed for high-volume to automate and simplify the process.

Most companies are still confused by what should be automated and how it can improve decision making. While automation has transformed many other business areas, including marketing, supply chain, and sales, recruitment is still immature in its adoption of these solutions. Only 27% of enterprise companies are planning to automate more than 50% of their talent acquisition processes this year, and most of those companies are just automating the application process. Automation can significantly improve high-volume recruitment by improving efficiency and reducing the administrative burden placed on recruiters and hiring teams.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of companies with high-volume recruitment needs are not satisfied with their current ATS. Most traditional ATS systems lack capabilities to support high-volume recruitment such as programmatic advertising, scheduling, or communication. High-volume recruitment technology must be simple, intuitive, and mobile-responsive. The less systems that companies need to manage, the better. Eighty-two percent (82%) of companies with high-volume hiring needs are increasing their investment in technology this year.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of companies with high-volume recruitment needs are not satisfied with their current ATS

RECRUITER EXPERIENCE



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.

1/3

One in three recruiters are looking for new jobs

30%

Thirty percent (30%) of recruiters are feeling more burned out this year than last year

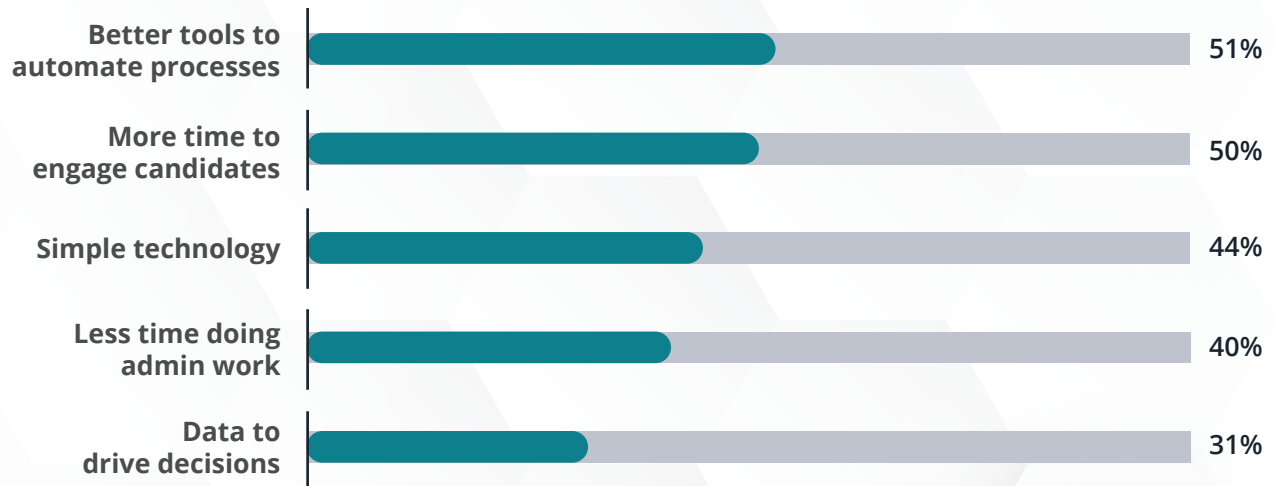
42%

Forty-two percent (42%) of recruiters do not have the resources they need to be successful

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, one in two recruiters would leave their current role for better technology.

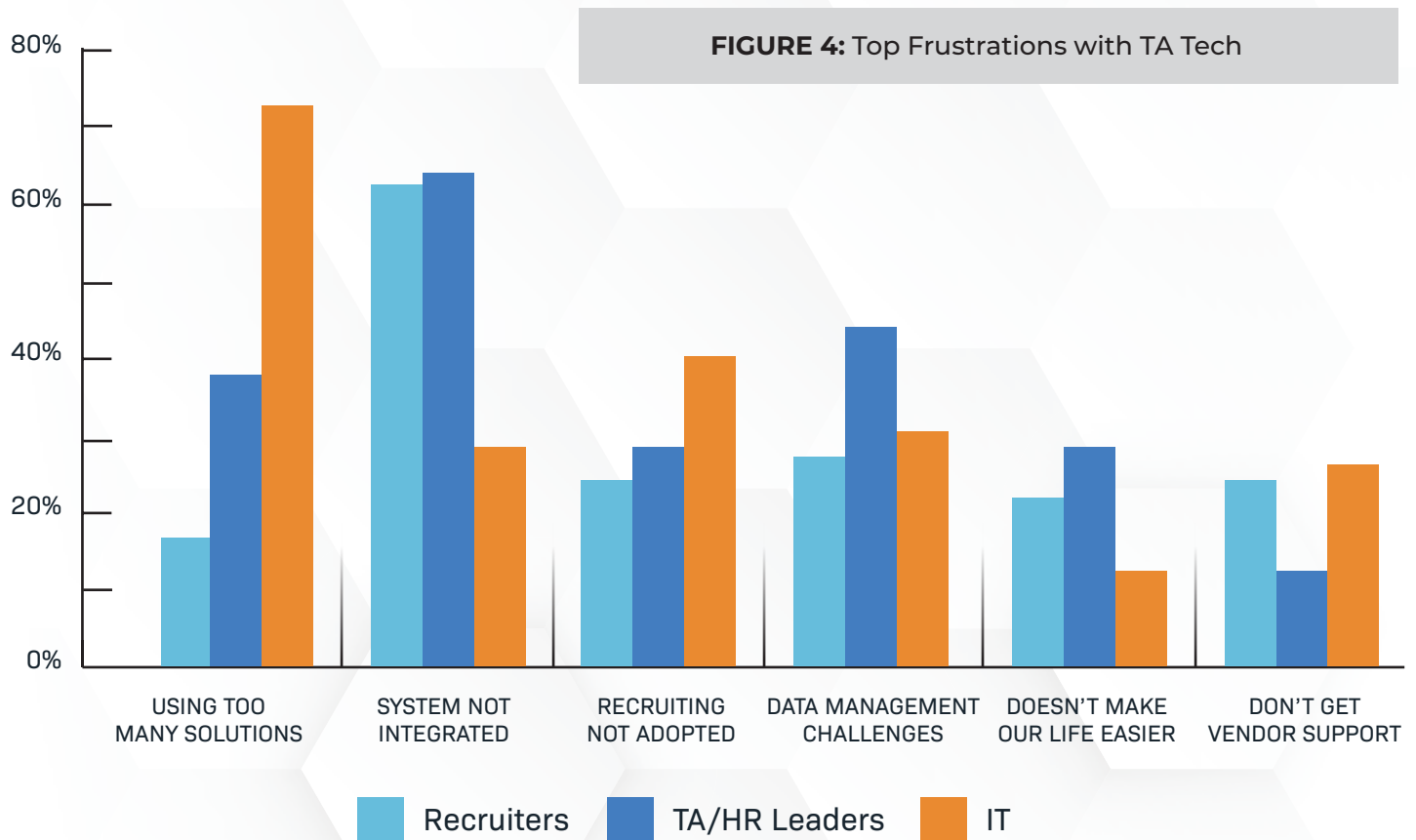
FIGURE 3: Resources that Recruiters Need

The increased focus and investment in talent acquisition must include high-volume recruitment and the recruiter experience. 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.

TOP CHALLENGES



Today's companies face several frustrations with talent acquisition technology. 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.



- 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.

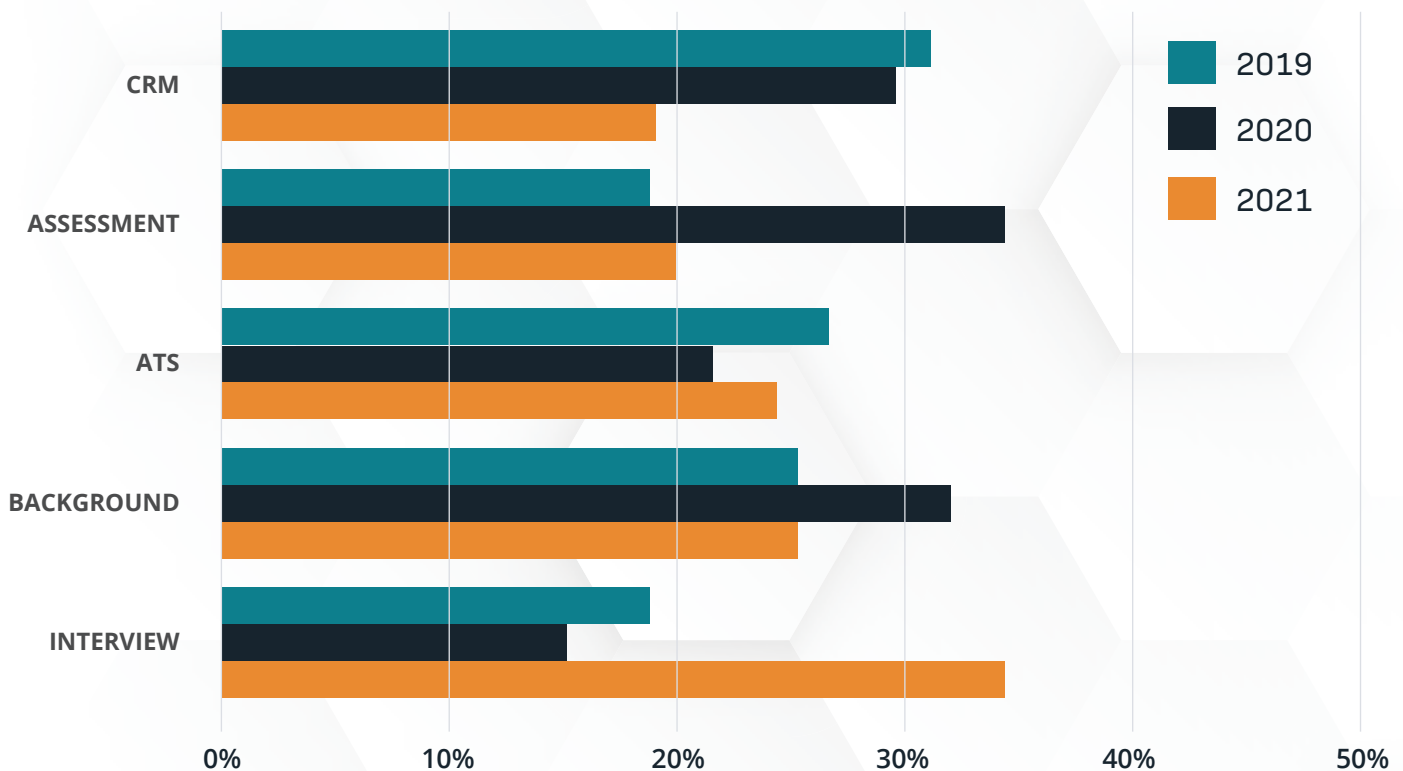
KEY AREAS OF REPLACEMENT



Companies are not only buying more technology this year, but they are also replacing areas of technology. Aptitude Research found that less companies are replacing their CRM this year than in 2019 and 2020 while more companies are replacing their interview providers. These solutions include interview management, scheduling, and digital interviews. Many interview solutions include assessments today as well.

Interviewing is a staple of any talent acquisition process and often the deciding factor for hiring a candidate. Surprisingly, few recruiters and managers are trained on how to conduct a good interview. Additionally, few organizations have a standard approach for how interviewing is conducted. When recruiters and managers have the right tools and best practices, interviewing can be a powerful process that determines the best fit for the organization.

FIGURE 5: Areas of Technology Replacement



ROI ANALYSIS

As talent acquisition is being held more accountable to the business, being able to show the value and the timeframe is critical. Measuring and demonstrating ROI is a crucial part of any technology decision and does not need to happen after a company makes its investment - it should actually be considered before.

The ROI analysis looks at the financial value of an investment in technology and weighs the costs and benefits. This section of the guide examines the timeframe for seeing ROI and the expected costs and benefits. It also includes several examples for calculating ROI.

The ROI is calculated simply as the Net Benefit compared to the Total Cost of the project - the time period is also an important consideration.

TIMEFRAME

THE TIMEFRAME FOR WHEN YOU START TO SEE THE VALUE.

ROI

THE BENEFITS DIVIDED BY THE COSTS.

SAVINGS

THE AMOUNT SAVED DURING THE PAYBACK PERIOD.



BENEFITS - COST

COSTS

Examples of **BENEFITS INCLUDE:**

- Reduced costs spent on ineffective solutions
- Reduced costs spent on recruiter's productivity
- Increased conversion rates
- Improved candidate experience
- Improved accuracy of hire
- Improved productivity for recruiting teams
- Improved quality of applicants
- Improved hiring manager experience
- Improved diversity, equity, and inclusion hiring
- Reduced bias in the hiring process
- Improved quality of hire

Examples of **COSTS INCLUDE:**

- Solution provider costs (products, licensing, services)
- Other external costs
- Third-party costs (consulting firms, implementation specialists)
- Total costs of ownership (IT's role in technology integration and data management)
- Internal costs (implementation labor, management, support, training, facilities, etc.)

Examples of **TIMEFRAMES INCLUDE:**

- First month
- Three months
- Six months
- Nine months
- One year
- Two years
- Three years

What are your **estimated costs and benefits** to your organization? Below is an ROI template for organizations to use to track costs, benefits and timeframe.

Get started with this template

COST TYPE	COST AMOUNT	BENEFIT TYPE	BENEFIT AMOUNT	TIMEFRAME

TALENT ACQUISITION LANDSCAPE: A NEW MODEL

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 buyer's decision much more complicated.

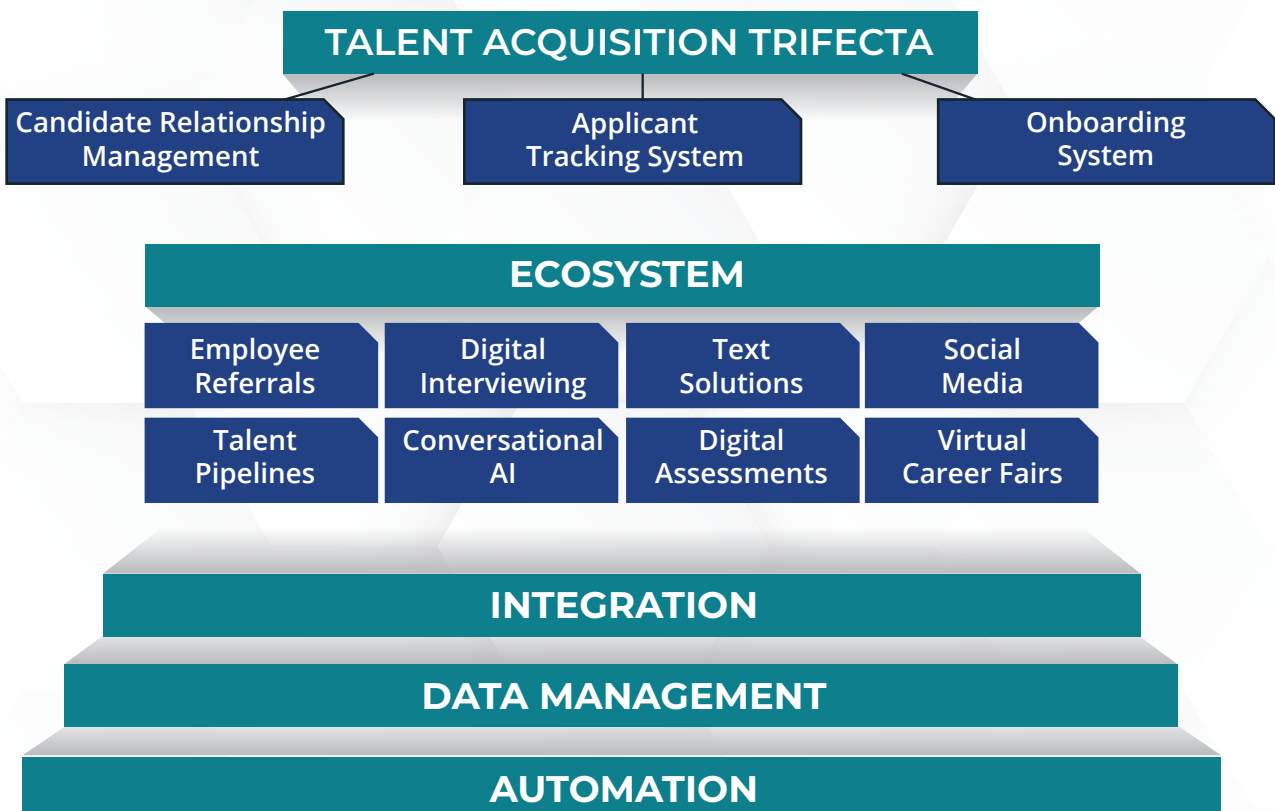
When evaluating technology providers to support talent acquisition, companies should start by looking at what they need and then begin to consider partners.

The modern talent acquisition technology stack includes three layers:

- **Talent Acquisition Big Four:** Four major technology solutions: CRM, ATS, onboarding, and internal mobility
- **Ecosystem:** An ecosystem of solutions to enhance the value of integrated talent acquisition
- **The Foundation:** The foundation of integration, data, and automation

When combined, these categories represent a holistic approach to strategic talent acquisition.

FIGURE 6: The Talent Acquisition Framework



THE TALENT ACQUISITION PLATFORM

The talent acquisition platform includes the following four systems:

- **CRM or Recruitment Marketing Platform:** Often referred to as the “pre-applicant platform,” this solution manages outbound sourcing, inbound recruitment marketing, and employer branding and integrates with any ATS. A valuable CRM or Recruitment Marketing Platform includes capabilities that maintain the employer brand, foster candidate relationships, and enhance messaging and communication efforts.
- **ATS:** An ATS encompasses the pre-hire lifecycle including candidate acquisition, requisition management, job postings, search capabilities, interview management, communications, and reporting. These systems foster a positive candidate experience through company career site branding, online employee referral programs, candidate self-service applications, pre-screening questions, assessments, global configuration, social and mobile capabilities, integration, contact management, compliance and in many cases, support for high-volume recruiting.
- **Onboarding System:** An onboarding system includes Forms Management, Tasks Management, and a New Hire Portal. Forms Management is the collecting, tracking, and managing of new hire forms such as W-4s, I-9s, etc. Tasks Management ensures that all onboarding activities are completed and automated. A New Hire Portal engages new hires in the company culture. The onboarding system sets the new hire up for long-term success by providing information on learning and development programs, succession plans, and performance goals.
- **Internal Mobility:** Internal mobility includes the capabilities to recruit internal talent and advance internal hires within the organization. Talent acquisition now has more responsibility for internal mobility. In fact, 58% of companies surveyed for this report are using or planning to use internal mobility capabilities this year. Internal mobility is comprised of two levels. The first level includes capabilities to engage with internal talent through career sites, job postings, and communication. The second level of internal mobility includes a full talent lifecycle approach and consistent experience from recruitment to succession planning, career development, and performance management.

THE ECOSYSTEM

The ecosystem includes a wide range of solutions that should integrate with all three systems. This layer of technology will look different for every company. Some of the categories include:

- ✓ **Assessments:**
Solutions based on science that look at skills, personality, and behaviors to identify the right fit.
- ✓ **Background Screening:**
Tools to check drug use, employment verification, education verification, and criminal background.
- ✓ **Digital Interviewing:**
Solutions to support interview scheduling, video interviewing, and branding.
- ✓ **Employer Branding:**
Solutions to enhance and strengthen branding through video, communication, and messaging.
- ✓ **Job Distribution:**
Capabilities to manage all job posting activities, integrations, and analytics.
- ✓ **AI Matching:**
Using AI to match jobs with candidates and candidates with jobs.
- ✓ **Programmatic Job Advertising:**
Automating the buying and selling of ads to remove human negotiation, predict performance, and streamline advertising.
- ✓ **Job Search Engine:**
Solutions to search millions of job listings across the web.
- ✓ **Online Reference Check Solutions:**
Solutions that automate the reference check process and provide a talent pool of passive candidates.
- ✓ **Employee Referrals:**
Automation to support the employee referral process.
- ✓ **Conversational AI:**
Intelligent chat that engages with candidates and improves efficiency in talent acquisition.
- ✓ **Search Technology:**
Ability to search for candidates using keywords or semantic search.

THE FOUNDATION



AI gives companies the insights and intelligence to be able to make better decisions and reduce bias.

The foundation layer supports the talent acquisition tech stack and includes integration, data management, and automation. Companies with a foundation that consists of these three areas are more successful with technology implementation and adoption.

Integration:

The practice of successfully integrating new talent technology into existing talent acquisition and HR systems. Without integration, companies lack consistency in experience, data, and delivery.

Data Management:

The practice of collecting, maintaining, and using data securely and efficiently to drive talent decisions. Without proper data management, companies face issues with data accuracy, data quality, and trust.

AI and Automation:

The practice of making a system or process operate automatically through technology. Without automation, companies face inefficiency through manual processes. AI gives companies the insights and intelligence to be able to make better decisions and reduce bias.

PART II:

Evaluating Providers

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PART 2: EVALUATING PROVIDERS

The following pages will provide an overview of areas of technology that enterprise companies are investing in and replacing this year, including ATS, CRM, Background Screening, Interview, Assessments, AI, Sourcing, DEI, and Onboarding. It will provide insights into trends in this market, key requirements, key criteria, and metrics to determine success. It will also provide recommendations on integration and automation.

Before evaluating technology options, organizations should conduct an internal needs analysis and be prepared to answer some questions internally. Companies need to identify and communicate expectations before evaluating solutions. Before signing on with a provider, companies should ask how confident the provider is in meeting these expectations and what plans they have in place to meet and even exceed them.

Companies should start with their business goals and then consider how they will achieve those goals. This internal assessment involves:



Evaluating how much time it takes to achieve those goals with the resources at hand



Considering how well companies are achieving their goals today



Measuring the ROI of the investment

INTERNAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

What It Is?

Internal Needs Analysis is an exploration of an organization's strengths and weaknesses, focusing on internal factors.

Why It Is Important?

Companies need to understand what requirements they have before they can begin to know what technology providers they need.

How to Do It?

SWOT analysis, interviews with key stakeholders, assessment of existing technology solutions, budget planning, long-term vision and alignment with corporate objectives, and readiness assessments.

INTERNAL QUESTIONS

- What is the formal process for evaluating technology and who is involved?
- What is the cost to your organization if you lose talent or do not hire quality?
- Do stakeholders look at projects individually or as a portfolio?
- What is the budget cycle at your company?
- What resources do you need and are they available?
- Who will be a champion for this project?
- What other solutions does this need to integrate with at our organization?
- By when do you need it implemented?
- How will you measure success?
- How many TA systems does the organization rely on? Of these, how many are standalone solutions?
- Are there activities that are still being done manually? If so, are there systems that can help you automate?
- How effectively are these HR systems working together?

EXTERNAL QUESTIONS

- How financially secure is your provider?
- How do they demonstrate ROI with clients?
- What type of clients do they support?
- What is the retention of their leadership team and employees?
- What is their product roadmap?
- What level of customer support can you expect?
- How often do they release product updates?
- Who do they partner with and how will they expand their partnerships?

EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

- What will be the experience of working with this provider to our business?
- What will be the experience to candidates? Recruiters? Hiring managers?
- Is this solution mobile-friendly vs. mobile optimized vs. responsive design?
- Does this solution require IT resources?

THE TALENT ACQUISITION CORE SYSTEMS

APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS

The talent acquisition systems market is not the commoditized market that it was a few years ago. Every provider is moving in a different direction in terms of priorities, capabilities, and roadmaps. Some providers are building out more robust TA functionality, while others are moving into talent management and employee experience. TA buyers must look beyond functionality and consider true partnerships in both the product and the vision. They must dig deeper and ask the tough questions to determine if a provider will be able to partner for the long-term. When evaluating ATS providers, companies can choose best-of-breed providers with deep functionality or ERP and HRMS providers that have deep integration with other areas of HCM. IT is typically involved in these decisions. Today's ATS must provide a positive experience for recruiters, hiring managers, and candidates.

KEY TRENDS

3%

Only three percent of companies are using all of the functionality in their ATS system

1/2

One in two companies would like their ATS to provide more capabilities

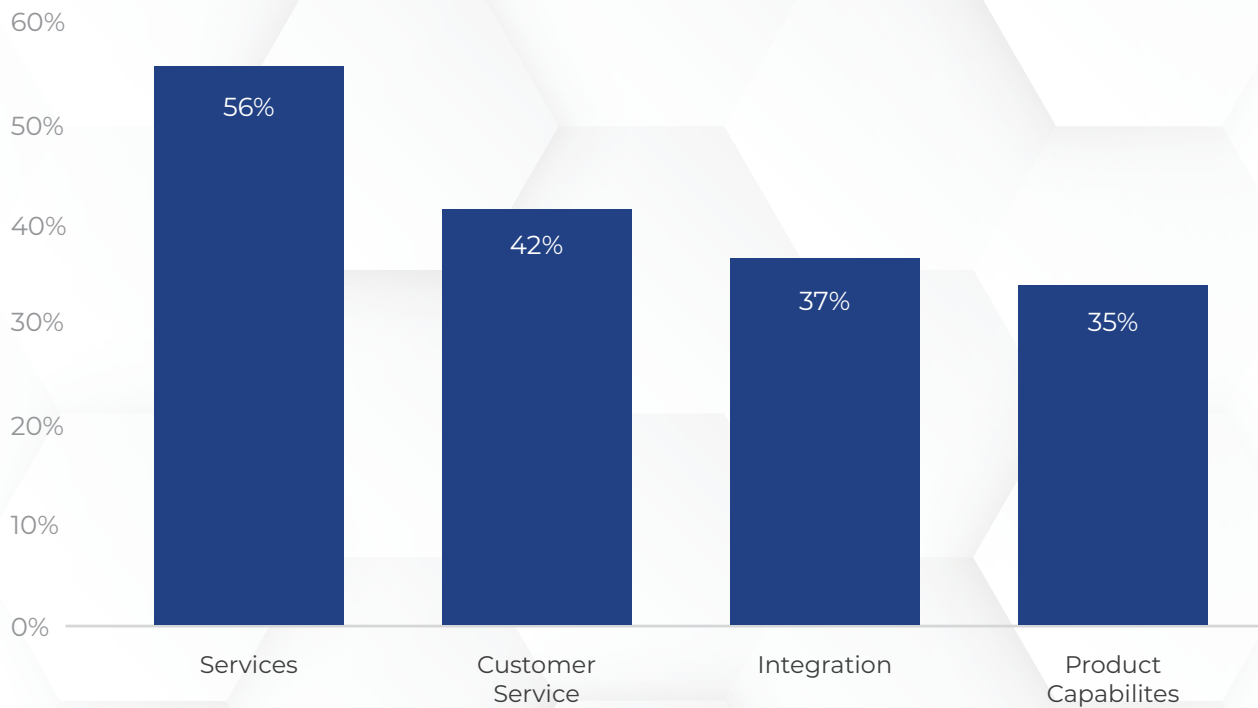
1/4

One in four companies are looking to replace their current ATS provider in 2022

KEY CRITERIA

When evaluating what is most critical when selecting a provider, companies identify services, customer support, integration, and product capabilities (see Figure 6). Companies are looking for true partnership and that comes from a commitment to customers, deep domain expertise, and dedicated support. This criteria came to light over the past year as companies adapted to change and needed providers that would be willing to work with them through a time of tremendous transformation.

FIGURE 6: Key Criteria for Selection



KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTING AN ATS INCLUDE:

Recruiter Experience:

- **Requisition Management:** Are there configurable tabs and fields that are based on user groups?
- **Job Advertisement:** Do you have third-party advertising and insight on advertising expenses so recruiters can make the best decisions?
- **Pre-Screening Questions:** Do we have the ability to search a library or have clients use their library to include questions during multiple phases of the recruitment process?
- **Candidate Approval:** Can we reject candidates or advance them and categorize them? Can we look at approval by list or chart? Can we look at status by source, by applicant date, or by distance?
- **Dashboards:** Are dashboards all configurable that show a range of recruitment metrics in a simple format?
- **Candidate Communication:** Do we have options for templates so that recruiters can quickly notify candidates and hiring managers of status? Is there two-way communication through SMS, messaging, or email?

Hiring Manager Experience:

- **Collaboration:** Are there options for secure collaboration with recruiters and hiring teams throughout the process?
- **Mobile-Responsiveness:** Do we have the ability to quickly approve requisitions, candidates, and offers on a mobile device?
- **Interview Scheduling:** Can we easily schedule interviews without leaving the system?


Candidate Experience:

- **Career Page:** Can we link to social channels and be able to connect with someone at the company?
- **Feedback:** Can we show feedback on status throughout the process?
- **Apply:** Can we use social profiles to view the status? Is there the ability to apply as a guest? Is this mobile-enabled?

CANDIDATE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)


A CRM system has become a critical component of any successful talent acquisition strategy. Seventy-four percent (74%) of enterprise organizations plan to invest in pre-applicant capabilities over the next year. These organizations recognize the importance of attracting, nurturing, and converting leads into applicants – particularly in a time when the competition for talent is on the rise, availability of skilled talent is low, and candidate expectations are continuing to mature. As talent acquisition professionals are being held more accountable, a recruitment marketing platform is a necessary investment. Despite this increased momentum around recruitment marketing, organizations still have several misperceptions about what these solutions can do and how they should be used.

KEY TRENDS



64%

Sixty-four percent (64%) of companies spend more on their CRM/ Recruitment marketing platform than their ATS



72%

Seventy-two percent (72%) of enterprise companies are investing or planning to invest in CRM capabilities this year



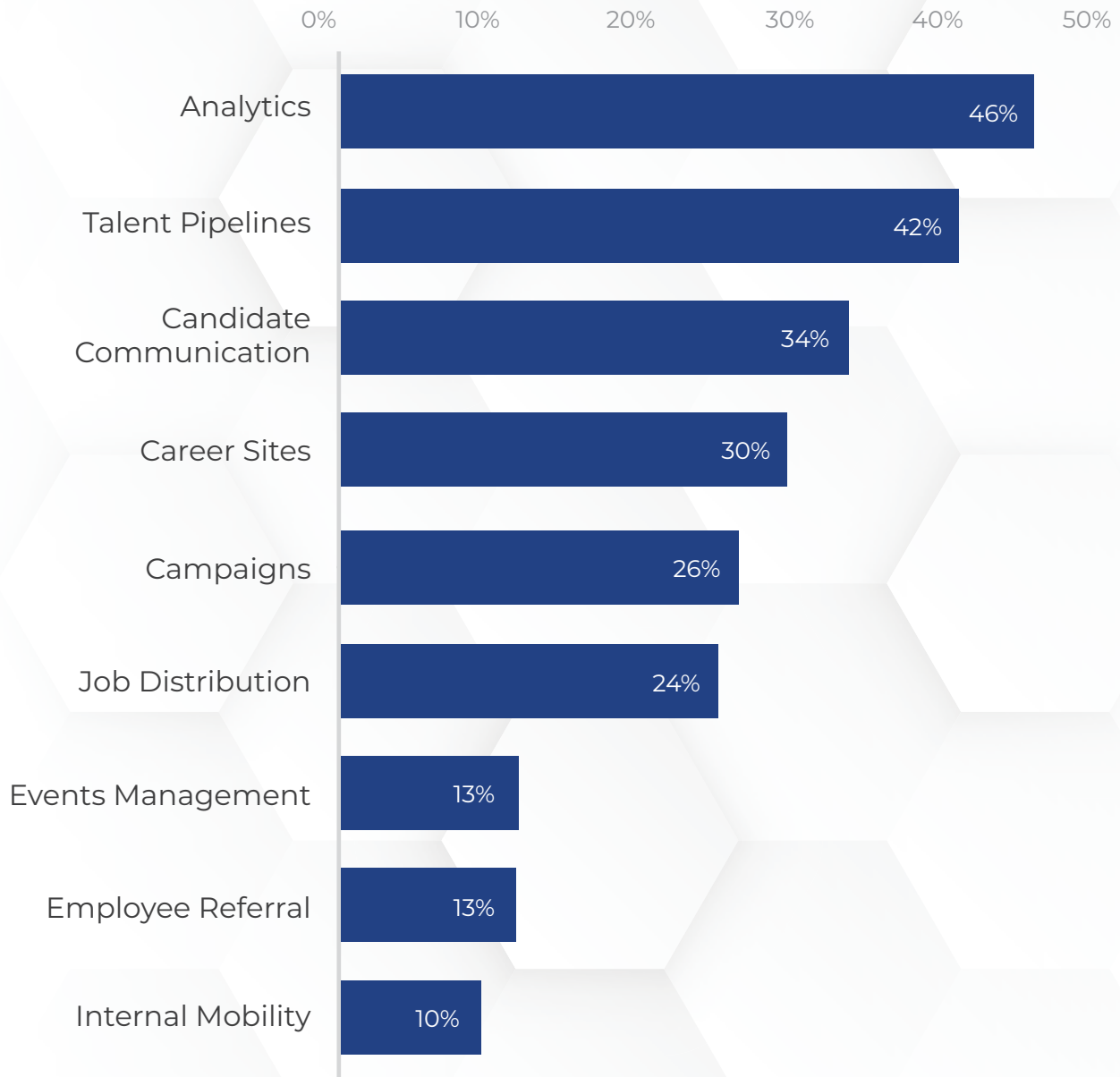
46%

Forty-six percent (46%) of companies stated that analytics is the most critical capability in CRM

KEY CRITERIA

When considering CRM, companies are looking for a provider that can help them engage and nurture with talent before they apply. Enterprise organization (cited analytics, campaign management, and communication as the key requirements in a CRM solution. However, unlike SMB organizations, enterprise organizations are looking to invest in stand-alone providers. (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7: Key Benefits of CRM





KEY REQUIREMENTS

Key requirements for selecting a CRM include:

- Are candidates manually added/removed by users and workflows?
- Does the system search candidates on Google and LinkedIn?
- Does the system track candidate engagement levels?
- Can the system track and store all candidate engagement and visit history?
- Can the system search candidate pools using multiple criteria?
- Do companies have visibility into all job applications?
- Does the system allow for user's notes on candidate profiles?
- Can companies post candidate information back to the ATS?
- Does the system include email and message templates to use with the candidate's communication and workflow?
- Can companies see a candidate's application completed status feeding back from the ATS?

ONBOARDING

Onboarding can have the greatest impact on talent acquisition efforts. When companies invest in a positive new hire experience, they ensure that the effort they put toward attracting and recruiting talent hasn't gone to waste. When onboarding goes "right", new hires feel engaged, motivated to perform and eager to contribute to overall business objectives. When onboarding goes "wrong", employees feel resentful and may even begin to question their decision to join the organization. Onboarding solutions include forms management, tasks management, and socialization in the company culture. Most companies use their ATS provider, learning providers, or HRMS provider for onboarding solutions.

KEY TRENDS

90%

Ninety percent (90%) of companies are using or would like to use their ATS for onboarding capabilities

1/2

Only one in two companies are looking to increase their investment

70%

Seventy percent (70%) of companies state that onboarding is owned by talent acquisition

KEY CRITERIA

Onboarding solutions can have a dramatic impact on the new hire experience. They ensure that companies are staying compliant and that new hires are being productive and contributing to organizational goals from the beginning. Companies need to consider providers with deep domain expertise in onboarding. Companies using technology are three times more likely to improve first year retention and two times more likely to improve new hire engagement. One in two companies focus more on forms and compliance when evaluating providers than in the new hire experience.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

Key requirements for selecting an Onboarding System include:

Forms Management:

- Do you support I-9 compliance and eVerify?
- Do you have automated forms completion?
- Do you have eSignature?
- Do you integrate with ATS or HRMS providers?
- Do you have forms compliance?
- Can companies see a candidate's application completed status feeding back from the ATS?

Tasks Management:

- Do you have automated scheduling?
- Do you have manager dashboards?
- Do you automate assignments?
- Do you automate reminders and notifications?

Socialization:

- Do you have a new hire portal?
- Do you have new hire communication (SMS, messaging, conversational AI)?
- Do you have video capabilities?
- Mentoring and coaching
- Integration with learning management systems and learning content
- Collaboration capabilities

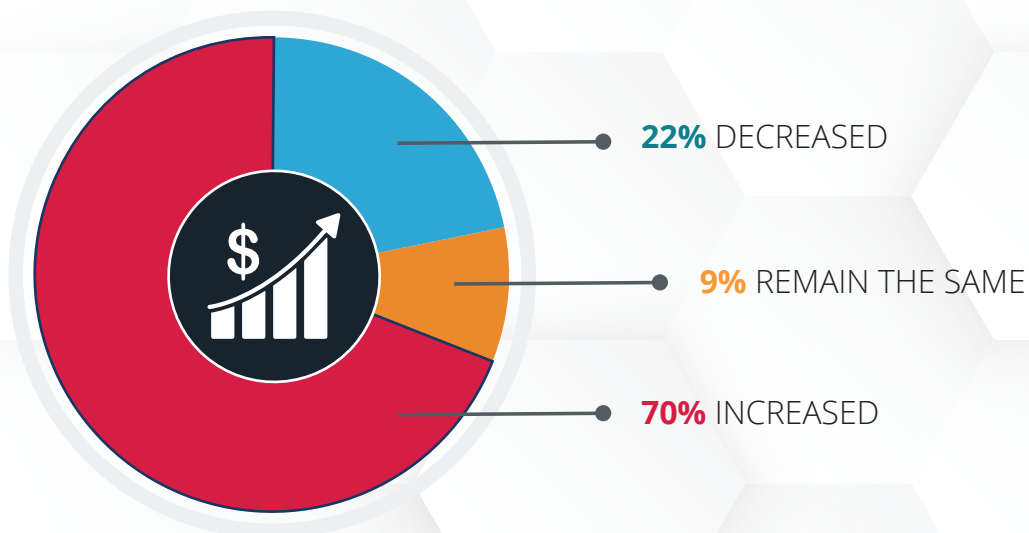
INTERNAL MOBILITY

70%

of companies are increasing their investment in internal mobility

The past two years have accelerated the interest and investment in internal mobility. According to Aptitude Research, 70% of companies are increasing their investment in internal mobility and 22% of companies plan to continue with the same investment (see Figure 8). Investment in internal mobility includes changes to talent strategies, percentage of internal hires, ownership, and technology. As companies increase their interest and investment, 84% of these companies are incorporating internal mobility in their talent acquisition strategy.

FIGURE 8: Investment in Internal Mobility



KEY TRENDS



Ninety percent (90%) of companies are using or would like to use their ATS for onboarding capabilities



Only one in two companies are looking to increase their investment



Seventy percent (70%) of companies state that onboarding is owned by talent acquisition

KEY CRITERIA

Onboarding solutions can have a dramatic impact on the new hire experience. They ensure that companies are staying compliant and that new hires are being productive and contributing to organizational goals from the beginning. Companies need to consider providers with deep domain expertise in onboarding. Companies using technology are three times more likely to improve first year retention and two times more likely to improve new hire engagement. One in two companies focus more on forms and compliance when evaluating providers than in the new hire experience.



AWARENESS

- Posting of jobs to internal career sites
- Communicating jobs to internal candidates
- Promoting and marketing jobs internally
- Providing feedback to internal candidates



DEVELOPMENT

- Providing learning and development opportunities to internal candidates
- Identifying the skills that employees have and the skills that they need for the future
- Connecting employees to peers to expand skills
- Encouraging career growth and promotion
- Personalizing rejection and future opportunities
- Connecting employees to peers

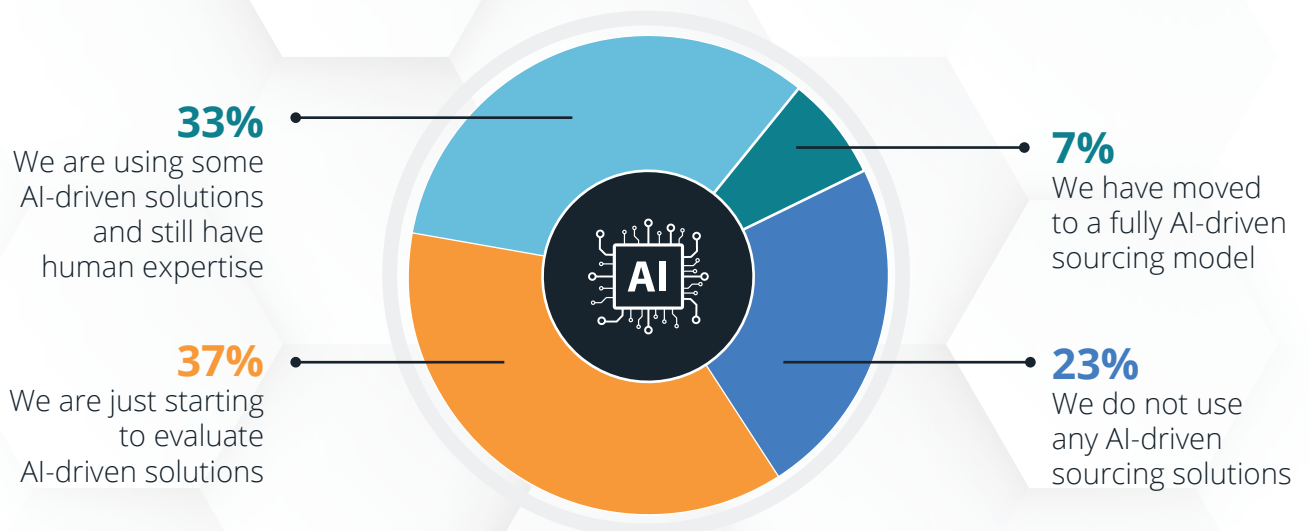
THE ECOSYSTEM SOURCING

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’s 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. Yet, many sourcing strategies fail to deliver results. Technology plays a critical role in improving sourcing.

KEY TRENDS

AI allows sourcers and recruiters to focus on building relationships with the right talent. AI provides the insights that recruiters and hiring managers need to make the best decisions.

FIGURE 9: AI Adoption in Sourcing



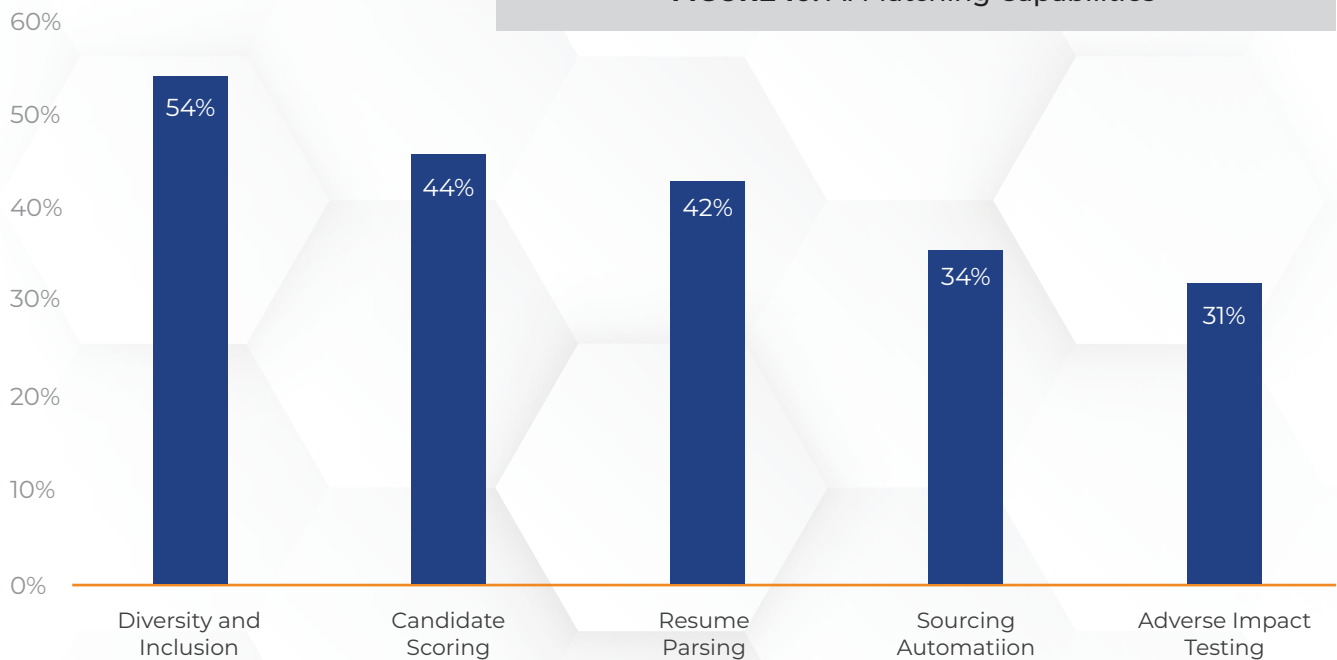
Every organization is at a different stage of maturity with their use of AI matching to support sourcing and talent acquisition efforts. Only seven percent (7%) of companies have moved to a fully AI-driven sourcing model and 33% are using it in combination with human expertise. For companies hesitant about AI matching or sourcing automation, they have different models to consider, and human expertise plays a critical role in sourcing and decision-making. Even many of the AI-driven sourcing providers offer some combination of technology and human expertise.

KEY CAPABILITIES

Although companies understand the value of sourcing tools, they do not always know what to evaluate when finding a technology partner. Aptitude Research found that the top drivers for investing in AI-driven sourcing include diversity, equity, and inclusion; candidate scoring; resume parsing; sourcing automation; and adverse impact testing (see Figure 10).

- **DEI:** Capabilities to help with job description writing, masking the screening process, and automating the ranking of candidates, thus interrupting bias early in the process.
- **Candidate Scoring:** Help companies rank and sort candidates to make it easier for recruiters and hiring teams to manage applicant workflow and identify quality hires.
- **Resume Parsing:** Capabilities to parse the data and skills included on the resume.
- **Sourcing Automation:** Find candidates and quality leads from existing systems or external sites.
- **Adverse Impact Testing:** Automating adverse impact, the negative effect an unfair and biased selection procedure has on a protected class.

FIGURE 10: AI Matching Capabilities



THE ECOSYSTEM BACKGROUND SCREENING

Background screening is a critical component of a winning talent acquisition strategy. For most companies, background screening is non-negotiable and has become ingrained in the recruitment process. But too often, it's treated as a tactical activity rather than a strategic initiative. Companies understand that authenticating an applicant's information is an important step, but they do not always understand the value it can bring to their overall quality of hire. Aptitude Research found that organizations that invest in strategic background screening solutions significantly improve the candidate experience and retention of quality employees.

Candidates receive a fair process when automation is used, reducing the human decision-making process.

KEY TRENDS



80%

Over 80%
of organizations
use screening



39%

Thirty-nine percent
(39%) do not screen
for every job



76%

Nearly three-
quarters (76%) are
confident they
get senior support
for background
screening

KEY CRITERIA

Forty percent (40%) of companies are increasing their headcount this year and one in three do not have the right data to make decisions - making background screening a critical part of the talent acquisition process. Employers state that the biggest challenge associated with background check technology is the ability to integrate background check data into the hiring process and systems involved.

The background check process can also significantly impact the candidate experience. Most background checks are run at the time that a hiring decision is being made. It is a critical point in the process where inaccurate data or delays can result in the loss of candidates. Too often, companies go with large, established background screening brands and are missing some of the emerging providers that are disrupting this market.



KEY REQUIREMENTS

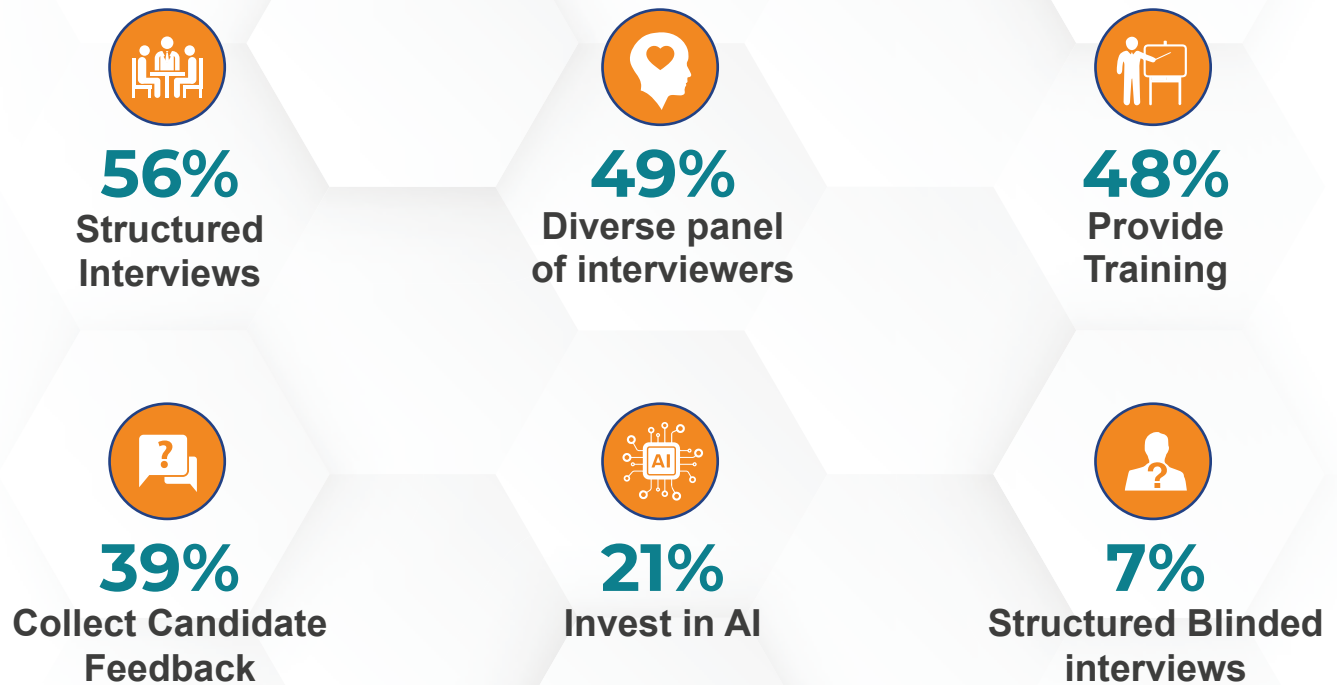
Key requirements for selecting a background screening provider include:

- Do you have built-in compliance: EEOC, FCRA, Ban The Box, etc. via online consents and dispute processes?
- Do you streamline processes and workflows, improving time-to-fill?
- How do you integrate with existing ATS and HRIS?
- Do candidates have the ability to review results?
- Do you offer online or in-person support for candidates?
- Is preliminary scoring with hiring matrices and adjudication included?
- Is there adverse action automation/assistance?
- Are you knowledgeable of salient laws (FCRA, Ban the Box, etc.)?
- Do you belong to members of associations such as NAPBS, National Consumer Reporting Association (NCRA), etc.?
- Do you educate end-users on cutting-edge legal developments?
- Do you have capabilities to initiate the background check by texting the candidate?

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

According to Aptitude Research, nearly 90% of companies are concerned with reducing their talent acquisition process bias. When talent acquisition leaders are asked what actions they take to reduce bias, most companies focus on training programs. Sixty-three percent (63%) of companies in this study are relying on training to improve DEI (See Figure 11). While these programs can provide insight and education, they often just check a box to reduce bias and not fundamentally address the problem. Companies in the interview stage, are using structured interviews and panel interviews to reduce bias.

FIGURE 11: Reducing Bias in Talent Acquisition



KEY CRITERIA

DEI is a systemic challenge that is not solved by a one-time investment in training. Companies must carefully examine their realities and be open and transparent about their progress. Companies must identify diversity metrics from recruitment marketing to onboarding.

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?

Turnover: What was the turnover rate of diversity hires (within their year)? How did it compare to the turnover rate of all new hires?

Candidate Satisfaction: What was the average diverse applicant satisfaction rate (from a survey)? How did that satisfaction rate compare to the satisfaction rate of non-diverse hires?

KEY REQUIREMENTS

- **Company Culture:** Does this provider have a dedicated DEI role? Has the provider made changes internally to improve diversity? Does this provider have a diverse leadership team?
- **Product Capabilities:** Does this provider include blinded resumes or blinded interviews to reduce bias? Does this provider consider how ethical AI and AI matching can reduce bias by reaching more candidates and providing a fair process? Does this provider have deep analytic insights into DEI? Does this provider offer intelligent writing capabilities to remove bias?
- **Services:** Does this provider offer education, training, or support for helping companies improve diverse hiring?

KEY REQUIREMENTS

Key requirements for selecting a background screening provider include:

- What types of interviews can the platform schedule? (For example, back-to-back interviews, panel interviews, phone screens)
- Can you work with multiple parties to schedule a group interview?
- How are recruiters notified when a candidate selects an interview time?
- How do you reduce bias in the interview process?
- How often can recruiters update their availability?
- Can the scheduling platform be accessed anywhere/anytime?
- Can recruiters set restrictions on how many interviews are scheduled per day?
- What other tools can be integrated into the solution (screening assessments, chatbots, or video interviews)?
- Can users set parameters on the amount of notice required for a candidate to cancel/reschedule an interview?
- What is the process and experience for recruiters/recruiting coordinators engaging with your technology?
- How much training would be needed by hiring managers, recruiters, and recruiting coordinators?
- How are candidates prioritized for scheduling times (first come/first serve, recruiter preference, etc.)?
- Does the software send automated reminders to the candidate about the upcoming interview? If so, how many reminders are sent and when? Can these settings be customized?
- Can the candidate export the interview meeting maker to a personal calendar?

ROI MEASUREMENT

Examples of BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Improved quality of hire
- Improved candidate experience
- Improved hiring manager experience
- Improved recruiter productivity
- Reduced bias

Examples of COSTS INCLUDE:

- Solution provider costs (products, licensing, services)
- Other external costs
- Internal costs (implementation labor, management, support, training, facilities, etc.)

DIGITAL INTERVIEWING

Digital interviewing includes scheduling, video, and communication capabilities for companies looking to better manage, track, and measure the interview process. The pandemic of 2020 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 are 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 manager 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.

KEY TRENDS



Companies have increased their investment in interviewing from 60% in 2019 to 74% in 2022



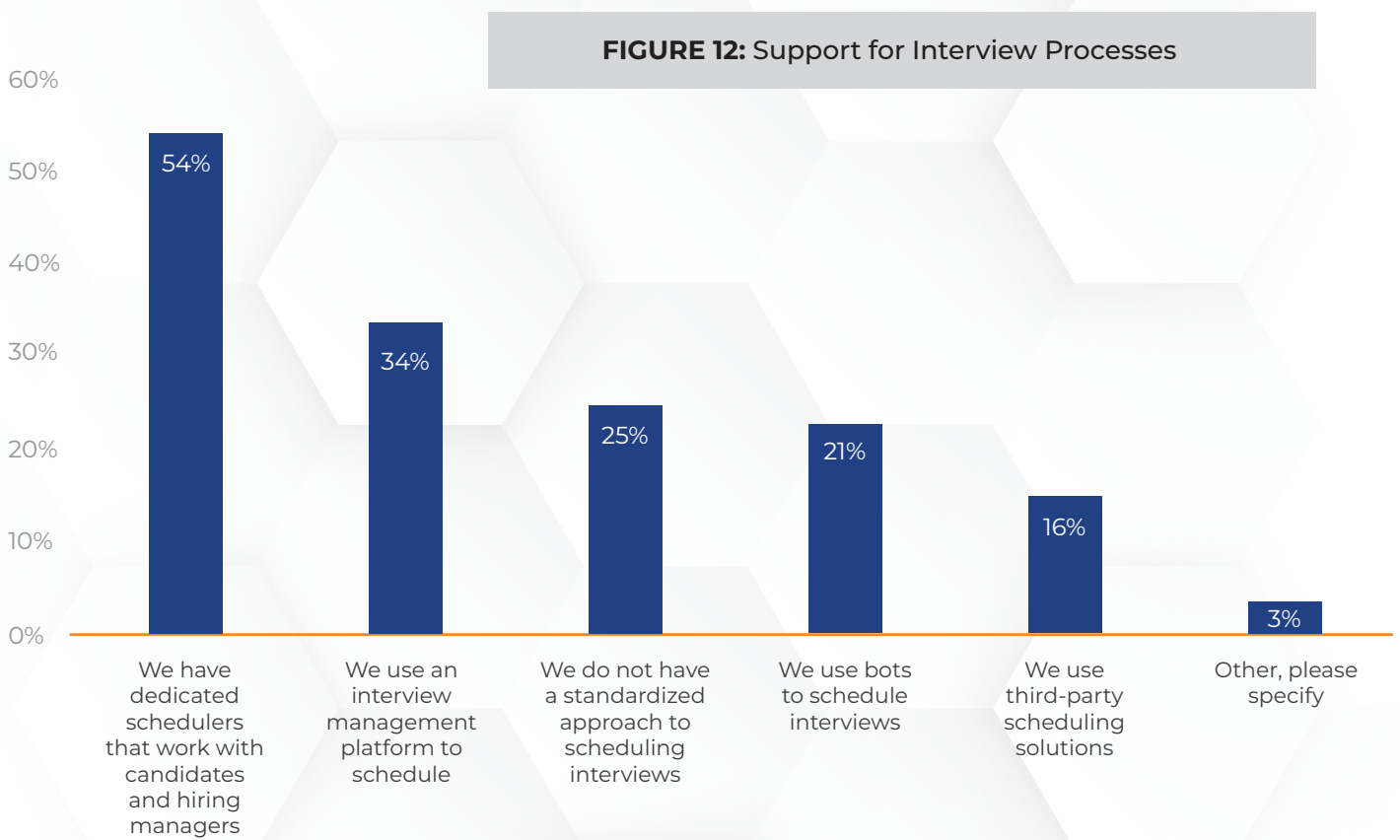
One in two companies state that interviewing is their greatest priority this year



One in three companies state that scheduling is the most important capability in interviewing solutions

KEY CRITERIA

Interviewing solutions help companies shift from an ad hoc approach to interviewing to a strategic and standardized one. Self-scheduling, digital interviewing solutions, and chatbots for scheduling and communication are all capabilities that are important when evaluating video solutions. The pandemic forced companies to think more strategically about their interview solutions and to automate some of these processes. Companies had to use technology to replace some of the manual activities. Figure 12 shows the technology that companies have today to support interviewing.





KEY REQUIREMENTS

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-

ASSESSMENTS

According to the latest research from Aptitude Research, companies have steadily increased their investment in assessments over the past three years. As organizations face mounting pressure to compete for talent across industries and improve quality of hire, assessments enable organizations to make better decisions around talent and improve business outcomes.

KEY TRENDS



Thirty percent (30%) of enterprise companies are considering game-based assessments



One in three companies are increasing their investment in assessments this year



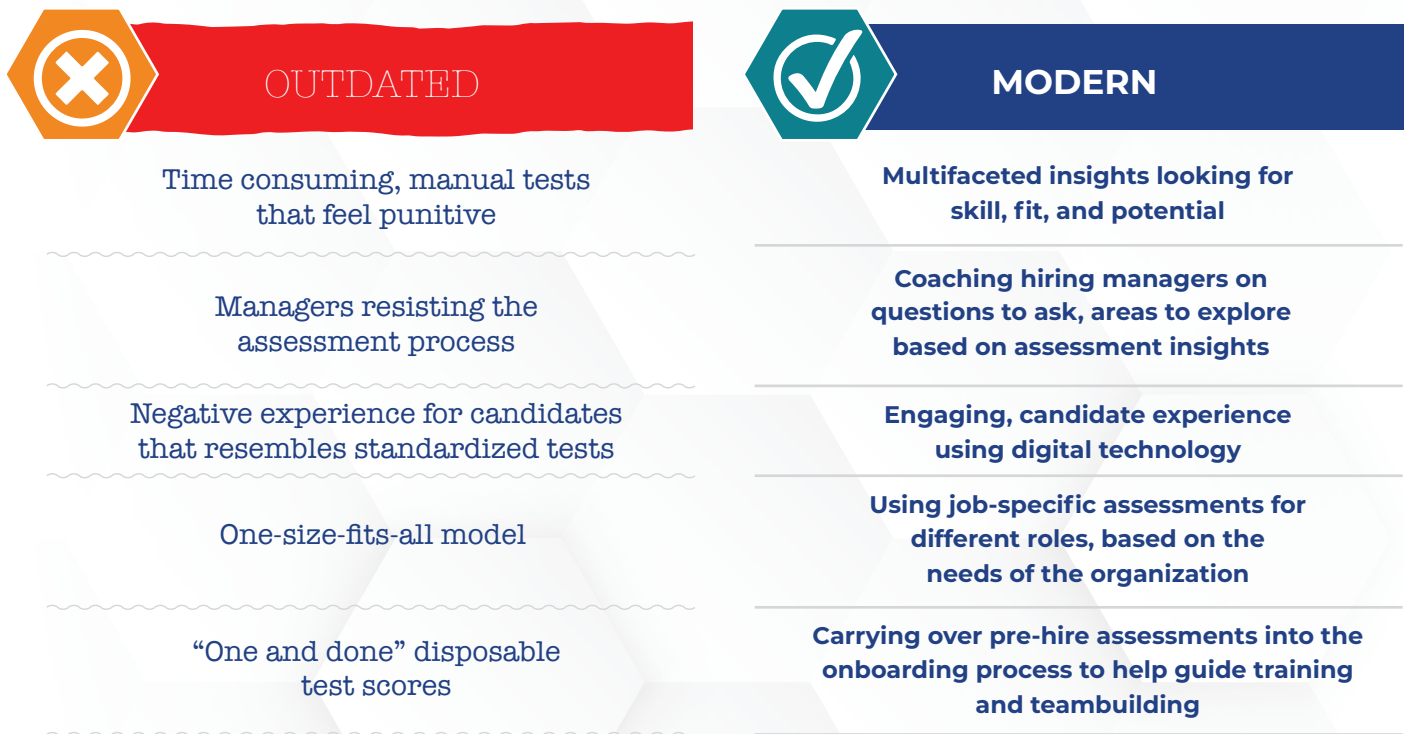
Sixty percent (60%) of companies state that assessments still take over 45 minutes to complete

KEY CAPABILITIES

When asked about the key capabilities for assessments, over 60% of companies stated that predicting performance is a priority. Using data to enable better decision-making and predict performance is one of the greatest opportunities for the future of assessments and talent acquisition.

Today, “best practice” companies of every size are rethinking their assessment strategy and investing in providers that can drive outcomes and improve the candidate experience. This balance between science and experience is the future of the assessment market.

FIGURE 13: Evolution of Assessments



KEY REQUIREMENTS

- Are there any other skills and abilities your platform can assess?
- How can your platform be used to assess leaders and executives?
- How can your platform be used to support career development, career pathing, and individual employee development?
- Is there a library of standard profiles, or are profiles built/calibrated individually for each client?
- What is your view on the importance of the candidate experience to the assessment process? How does this manifest in your current process?
- Do you collect data from candidates on their experience with the assessment?
- What is the performance of your assessments on mobile devices?

THE FOUNDATION



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. If a talent acquisition team does not conduct due diligence and collect proper documentation from their providers, it is very challenging to get IT to prioritize these projects.



Questions to Consider When Evaluating Providers

What other talent acquisition providers do you currently integrate with, and can you provide examples and documentation?

What are your standard integrations with third-party providers?

Do you offer support for web service API integrations that meet standard web logic?

Do you provide integration toolkits for administrators?

What type of support do you offer before, during, and after the integration process?

Does the HRIS vendor certify these integrations?

DATA MANAGEMENT

According to Aptitude Research, 82% of companies state that data plays a critical role in driving talent acquisition decisions. The right data can help design more efficient processes and help organizations better understand their candidates. Creating and maintaining data in other systems often takes time and is prone to error, especially in fast-moving businesses. Companies must manage this data from multiple systems, including internal data (data from its systems) and external data (data from publicly available sources such as social media, job boards, and economic data). Companies must also consider both structured and unstructured data. Structured data is highly organized and formatted, so it is easily searchable in databases. Unstructured data, on the other hand, has no organization or pre-defined format. Managing this data and ensuring accuracy, integrity, and quality are critical parts of talent acquisition technology strategy.



Questions to Consider When Evaluating Providers

How do you help companies resolve errors?

What data does your system need to operate effectively?

Do you provide transparency on data?

Can your data integrate with my existing systems?

Does your solution automate the connection of data from external sources?

What type of post-sales support do you offer?

How often do you clean your data?

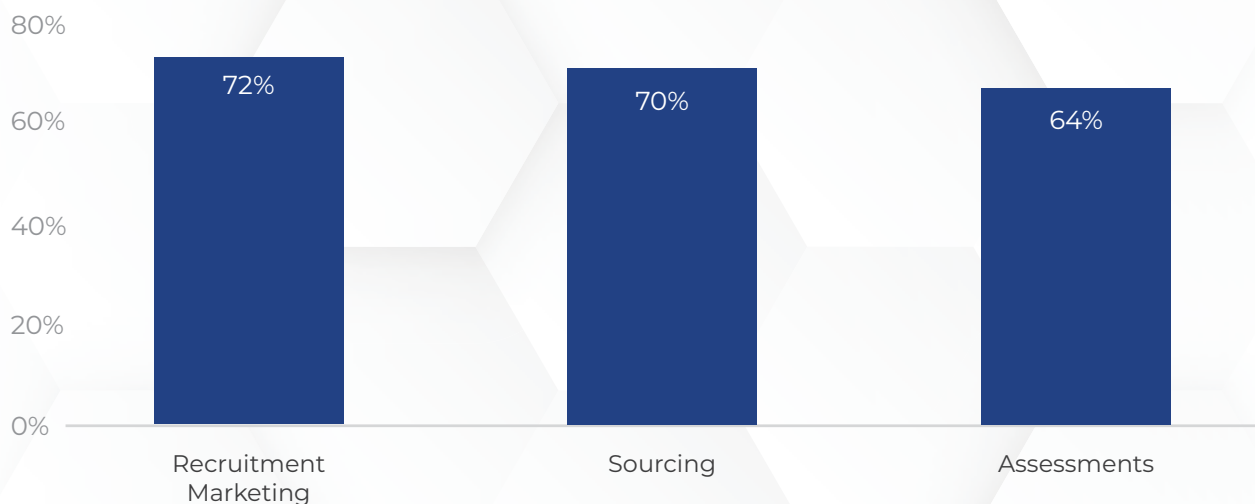
Where do your sources of data come from?

Do you offer backup of all customer data?

AUTOMATION/AI

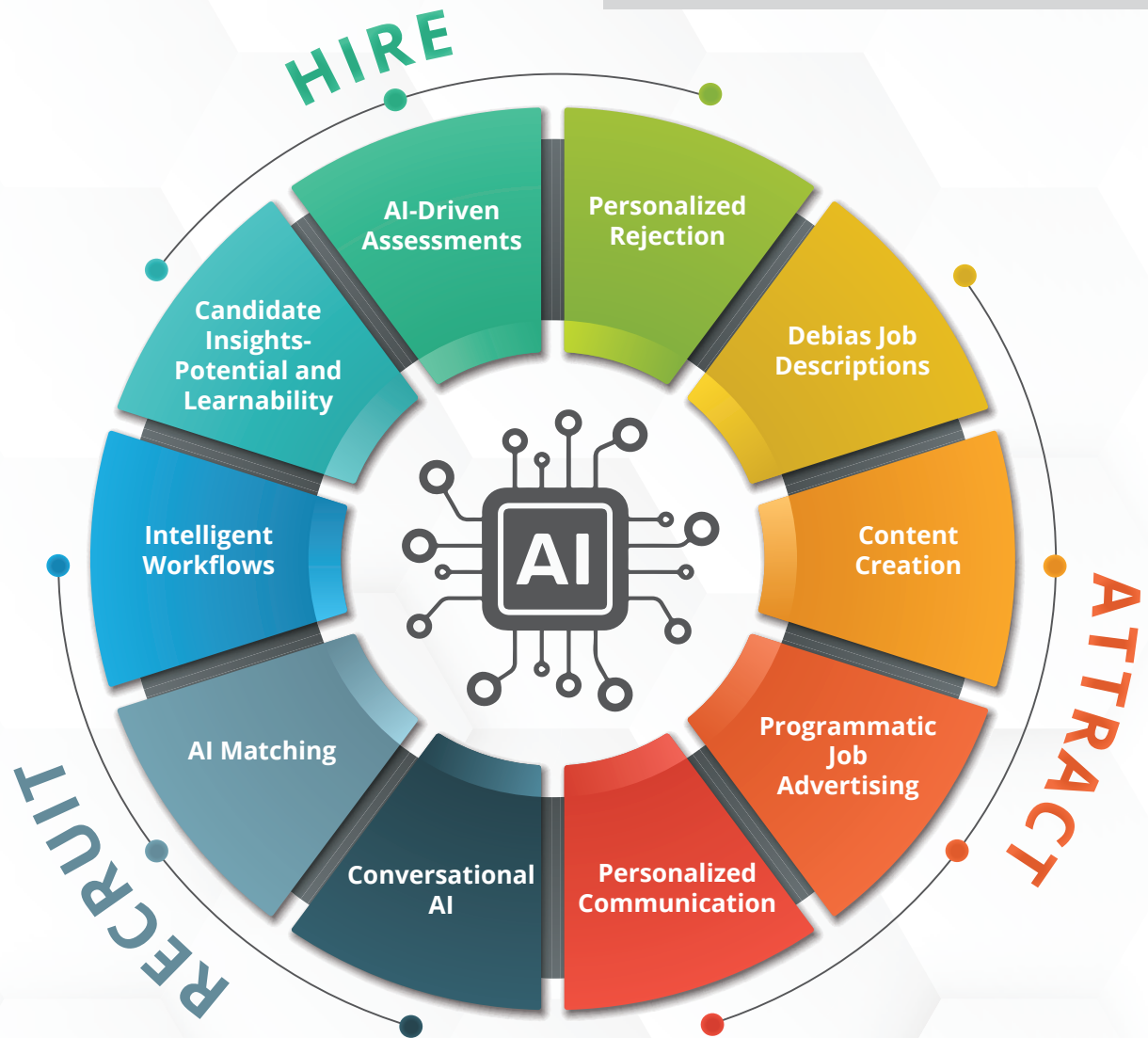
Most companies are still confused by what should be automated and how AI can improve decision making. While automation has transformed many other business areas, including marketing, supply chain, and sales, recruitment is still immature in its adoption of these solutions. Only 27% of enterprise companies are only planning to automate more than 50% of their talent acquisition processes this year, and the majority of those companies are just automating the application process. AI is now part of every talent acquisition technology decision, but companies have to consider ethical AI and trust their providers.

FIGURE 14: Top Areas of Adoption for AI



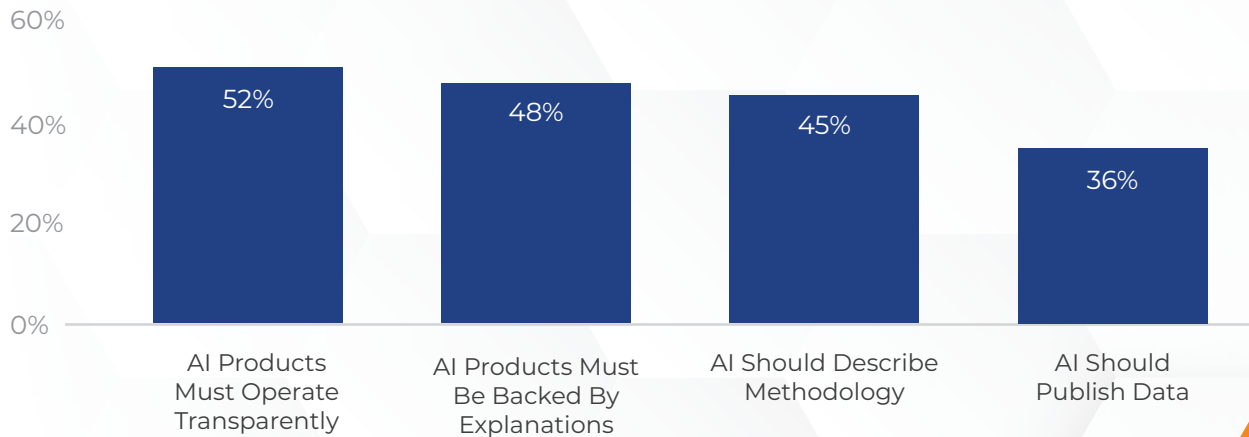
Companies hesitant about AI have different models to consider, and human expertise plays a critical role in sourcing and decision-making. Even many AI-driven sourcing providers offer some combination of technology and human expertise. AI can help companies personalize candidate communication, target the right talent, match the right candidates to jobs, and make decisions on talent that will predict performance. But AI plays a role across all areas of talent acquisition. Figure 15 highlights some of the applications of AI across attraction, recruitment, and hiring.

FIGURE 15: AI Across Talent Acquisition



AI can help companies match talent to jobs, but it must be used ethically. Ethical AI is the most critical consideration of AI matching and the biggest differentiator between providers. Unfortunately, not every provider is committed to ethical AI or providing transparency to companies on the data they are using, the algorithms they develop, or the methodologies used.

The topic of ethics in AI raises questions about humanity in the talent acquisition process. Companies must consider ethical AI as they evaluate providers and understand if products operate transparently, are backed by explanations, describe their methodology, and frequently publish their data (see Figure 16). In addition, addressing ethics in AI builds confidence with employers and candidates who want to understand how their data is being used.

FIGURE 16: Considerations for Ethical AI

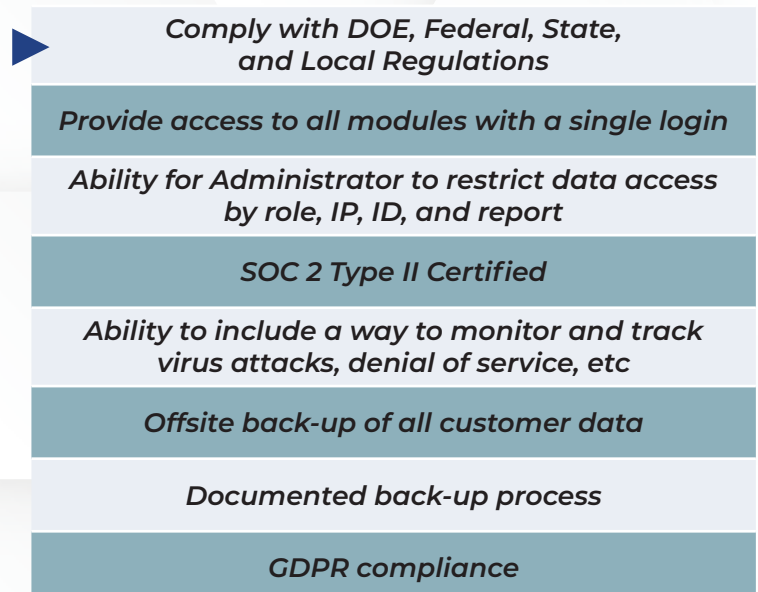
Questions to Consider When Evaluating Providers

- **Inclusivity:** How can AI reduce bias early in the process so that talent acquisition is consistent and fair?
- **Transparency:** How can AI provide transparency into how data is used and decisions are made?
- **Trust:** How can AI and quality data build trust and confidence between employers and candidates?
- **Communication:** How can AI provide candidates with consistent communication and personalized feedback and coaching?

SECURITY

As IT becomes more involved in technology decision making and companies invest in more solutions to support talent acquisition, security is an important concern.

Here are some areas that companies should consider when evaluating providers and ensuring security of information.



PART III:

Moving Forward

Authored By:



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PART III: MOVING FORWARD

Once companies understand their unique requirements and trends influencing this market, they begin the buyer's journey of organizational readiness, selection, implementation, and adoption. The first step is gaining buy-in from key stakeholders.

This section outlines 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.

Key Stakeholder	Priorities	Metrics
 HR Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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
 Talent Management Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensuring that solutions are integrated with core HR systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ • Compliance • Adoption • Integration
 Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensuring that the system fits into the overall HR budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ • Cost savings • Adoption

Several roles in the talent acquisition function are measuring the success of talent acquisition technology initiatives and helping to drive these relationships with other parts of the organization. A few of these roles include:



Recruiting Operations Professionals: Less than 30% of companies have a dedicated recruiting operations role that can help support integration, implementation, and adoption.



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



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

Organizational Readiness:

During this phase, solution providers often offer a variety of support materials to help educate customers on the market and identifying their own requirements.

Some of the differentiators that provide a stronger customer experience include:

- Research institutes and advisory firms that provide unbiased market insights, educational informational, and both in-house and third-party research
- Free demos, datasheets, case studies, and research models
- Webinars to help educate prospects on key trends and best practices
- Customer conferences and user groups where candidates are invited to connect with other customers and learn more

Selection

This phase typically involves the identification of use cases, RFP/RFI collection, customer references, on-site demonstrations, short-listing, and negotiation.

Some of the differentiators for selection include:

- Strong customer support and services
- Customer acquisition and retention rates
- Mobile-responsive design
- Strong partnerships and integration with the larger ecosystem
- Level of innovation and product enhancements

Implementation

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. Many solution providers are notorious for misleading customers with unrealistic timeframes or resources that may cost extra or are not available. Over the past year, companies increasingly cited that implementations were not delivered on-time or on-budget, and satisfaction with providers dropped to 20% as a result.

Several ways that solution providers differentiate themselves across implementation include:

- Implementation resources included in the cost
- Implementation support team to help meet expectations, set goals and be available for customer support throughout the process
- Educational materials to support companies

Adoption

Companies need to look at not only how their provider will partner with them during implementation, but also how they will make that relationship stick after year one, year two, and beyond.

Below are a few of the ways that providers differentiate themselves for adoption:

- Change management resources
- Customer advisory boards and councils
- Customer feedback sessions and “idea labs” where customers are free to voice concerns and connect
- High customer retention rates

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

With a better understanding of what a modern talent acquisition function should include and how the technology landscape can support that function, organizations should consider not only their current needs but their future as well.

Organizations that want a modern talent acquisition strategy supported by the right technology should consider the following:

Identify Requirements:	Invest in a Talent Acquisition Partner:	Build a Comprehensive Recruitment Plan:
<p>Companies must start by looking internally at their own processes and requirements before evaluating providers. By including stakeholders, identifying capability gaps, and setting priorities, companies are better prepared for their technology investments.</p>	<p>In order to overcome the complexities of talent acquisition and improve processes and efficiencies of their talent acquisition strategy, organizations need partners that can support everything from attracting to recruiting to onboarding talent.</p>	<p>Organizations need a clear understanding of all of the elements included in a high-performing recruitment function. As the workforce changes, companies will need to continue to reevaluate the talent acquisition model and adjust it.</p>



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](#).

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