

The logo for SmartRecruiters, featuring a white location pin icon to the left of the text "SmartRecruiters" in a white, sans-serif font. The background is a high-angle satellite view of Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and a mix of blue oceans, brown and green landmasses, and white clouds. The sky is a deep black with scattered white stars.

SmartRecruiters

Global Hiring Trends 2023

How Talent Acquisition Can Adapt and Thrive in
2023 and Beyond

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Introduction

In a time when macroeconomic and geopolitical events have a direct impact on business, talent acquisition (TA) leaders have the unique task of determining how they will adjust their strategies and practices to adapt, with little room for error. Many countries around the world have seen low unemployment, layoffs in some sectors, and talent shortages in others. In an age of evolving worker expectations and questions around the ever-changing future of work, talent leaders must keep their sights on attracting and hiring the people who will build and shape the future of their organizations.

The good news in all the recent turmoil is that talent acquisition has the respect and interest it deserves, with more TA leaders saying that they're more tied into the business than ever before.

- 77% of talent leaders say their talent acquisition strategies are more about total value creation for the company than about achieving cost savings, jumping 32 points in 2023 from just 45% the previous year.
- 87% of recruiting pros say TA has become a more strategic function over the past year.
- 70% of TA pros say the team can claim a seat at the proverbial table.¹

Having a seat at the table comes with additional responsibilities. Leaders must not only have a laser focus on how their teams are delivering value but also keep their eyes and ears open to look out for what's next. They also need on-demand actionable reporting and analytics to optimize hiring workflows and demonstrate ROI.

To guide you into the next phase, we consulted with SmartRecruiters leaders around the world and gathered insights from our customers. The trends shared here are based on real-life challenges and successful strategies of companies that hire thousands of people every year. We hope they inspire you to take action in a way that is tailored to your organization's needs as you address today's evolving challenges.



"The best companies today have an open mindset, a focus on building relationships, taking a creative approach, and doing more than just administrative recruiting. They are open to change because they recognize the need to do something different than they are currently doing."



Dennis Böcker
Vice President, DACH
SmartRecruiters

Read more from Dennis on the [SmartRecruiters blog](#)

Trends

1. Technology Meets Cost-Sensitivity

Today's talent leaders have access to hundreds of technology solutions for every possible recruitment issue and multiple core platforms to choose from. While some leaders have the luxury of picking and choosing their solutions, most others have a mix of newer and legacy systems that may or may not be best suited to the needs of a rapidly evolving hiring landscape.

- 53% of in-house recruiting pros predict their recruiting budget will decrease or stay flat in the coming year.²
- 77% feel their strategy is more focused on agility this year, an increase of 11 points since last year.³

Flat to declining budgets and a need for agility to dial up and in some cases dial down talent in uncertain times bring back the old refrain, "do more with less." Because no one system can do everything, companies are faced with the technical challenges of integrating systems, ensuring product adoption, and accessing actionable data. Additionally, their core TA system may charge integration fees, driving up costs.

The candidate journey has changed as well and the candidate experience needs to change along with it. New candidate expectations and technological developments highlight the need for a flexible, adaptive approach. Companies demonstrate agility when they adopt solutions as needs arise and sunset them when no longer necessary.



"There is no one tech stack to rule them all. The tech stack that will rule them all is not static; it's the one that allows you to adapt based on the needs of not just your individual company, but your individual team and your individual recruiters in your individual regions."



Allyn Bailey
Executive Director,
Hiring Success Services
SmartRecruiters



Tech Consolidation Creates Budget and Process Efficiency

In response to cost pressures, more companies are seeking to consolidate and specialize their tech stack at the same time.

- On average, a company invests in more than ten technology solutions for its recruitment function.
- 32% of those seeking to replace point solutions say they are doing so because they want to consolidate providers.⁴
- Gartner predicts that by 2025, the recruiting landscape will consolidate, resulting in 20% fewer point solution vendors in the marketplace.⁵

Implementing a core recruiting system that covers more functions within the talent acquisition pipeline—such as job advertising, CRM, and onboarding—promotes efficiency and saves money in both direct and indirect ways.

One of the direct ways to alleviate costs is to invest in a platform that helps optimize job board spending, has little to no integration fees, and eliminates barriers to making adjustments as business demands evolve. Indirectly, a technology-driven streamlined approach to hiring can improve recruiters' productivity, provide a better candidate experience, and facilitate recruitment marketing. Optimizing these core recruitment processes enables hiring teams to focus on candidate fit, potentially improving new hire retention and reducing future recruiting costs.



KinCare Reduces Total Cost of Ownership

“The single and integrated system of SmartRecruiters has given us a lower total cost of ownership while significantly improving user experience and recruiter productivity.”



Ben Rynja
Former Head of Talent Acquisition
KinCare

2. Powering a Better Candidate Experience with Intelligent Automation

Talent acquisition teams are not alone in the talent shortage: many need to do more with the same number or fewer people on staff, which means using technology to fill the gap. According to Aptitude Research, we've officially entered the Early Majority stage in the adoption of automation in HR.

- 60% of companies have increased investment in automation technologies in the past year.⁶

Automating key moments in the recruiting workflow not only improves efficiency but also helps hiring teams create a more positive candidate experience. However, the process of setting up varying regional, departmental, and role-based recruiting workflows with templated job descriptions, communications, and offers is a complex maze of configuration requiring detailed attention.

To top it off, there is a complex array of rapidly emerging new generative AI-based technologies. More developed and reliable AI technologies include chatbots, resume matching, and candidate screening. Years of caution around AI in recruiting have suddenly vanished as consumers were given access to new generative AI tools like ChatGPT.

- 68% of hiring professionals surveyed in February 2023 said they were "very hopeful" or "cautiously optimistic" about the impact of generative AI on recruiting.⁷

Companies that don't fully utilize automation to streamline their talent attraction, interviewing, and onboarding processes are increasingly competing with those that do. The upfront investment in optimal systems configuration to automate key stages in the candidate journey is now a necessity. To best lead your organization into the digital future, your future employees deserve a seamless hiring experience.



"People want to be hired quickly. Automation helps companies hire more efficiently, and AI combined with human oversight has moved from something people are curious about to something that's seen as helpful."



Marc-Cansius Koffi
Vice President, South Europe
SmartRecruiters

JYSK Shortens Hiring Time With Improved Candidate Experience

JYSK, a global retailer that receives 50,000 applications a month, reduced its time-to-fill from over 56 days to just 20 days by streamlining and automating core processes.

"SmartRecruiters allows us to focus on handling our candidates in a good way. Because they are also our customers, they build our perception in the market and impact our reputation. A good recruitment process leads to a good start for a new hire."



Camilla Ölander
Employer Branding Manager
JYSK

3. Linking Employer Brand, Candidate Experience, and ROI

With many countries around the world nearing maximum employment, differentiation through employer branding has become even more important as companies compete for the same talent.

- 60% of in-house recruiting pros predict their employer branding investments will increase this year.⁸
- More than half of large organizations are using approaches to recruitment marketing that include multi-channel touch points like InMail, email, and SMS (57%), employment branding campaigns (57%), recruitment events (57%), and social media recruitment (54%).⁹

Yet measuring the success of these campaigns can be difficult, as many initiatives are carried out in different systems—and often by different teams—that do not talk to one another. Additionally, employer brand and recruitment marketing activities can fall flat if the brand promise is not delivered upon in the application and hiring process.

- Only 41% of large organizations and 28% of smaller organizations assess recruitment marketing ROI/attribution.¹⁰
- 61% of organizations surveyed reported they are only rarely or sometimes able to define and measure the ROI of HR Technology systems.¹¹

Technology Maximizes the ROI of Brand Creative

The quest to attract not just more talent but the right talent requires a an artful blend of candidate-centric messaging, the smart application of technology, and cross-departmental coordination among teams. To stand out with candidates in an increasingly noisy employment marketplace, companies must develop a tighter relationship between the teams managing their career site, recruitment marketing, and general recruitment activities.

There's no question that a career site is the foundation of a strong employer brand. But to realize the full ROI of branded storytelling, the site should be the gateway to a great candidate experience. That includes optimization for search engines and job aggregators, the delivery of personalized content, and a seamless conversion that captures candidate information in a CRM or simplified application process.

When linked to a core recruitment system, data from an intelligent career site and optimized job board spending allows companies to measure ROI. Over time, candidate attraction tracking enables companies to seek out lower-cost venues or invest more heavily in channels that work to bring in the talent that builds the future of your company.



“Tougher times lead to greater scrutiny around costs. When you have a linked-up career site, job advertising, and ATS you get the full TA lifecycle data you need to prove your ROI.”



James Saunders
Global Head of
SmartRecruiters Attrax

4. The Rise of Data-Driven Hiring

One of the promises of technology is that the activities that require its use can be measured and therefore optimized. However, inconsistent adoption, a lack of data hygiene, and the manual work of pulling data from disconnected recruiting systems can keep teams from having the data they need to compete in today's market.

- **More than two-thirds** of large organizations track metrics like time to hire, source of hire, and offer acceptance rates.
- **Less than half** track new hire retention, pass-through/conversion rates, top-of-funnel activity, or time in stage.
- **Less a third** track cost per hire, quality of hire, and hiring manager satisfaction.¹²

The good news from this research is that most companies are tracking essential metrics that allow them to optimize the hiring process. But the less-often tracked metrics like quality of hire and hiring manager satisfaction are where talent acquisition shows its true business value: the ability to deliver the right quality of talent, on time, and against the right budget. Hiring velocity, hiring budget, and net hiring score (measures the fit between a new hire and the job) are the business-level [metrics](#) recommended by SmartRecruiters' Hiring Success methodology.

Data-driven hiring offers a powerful combination of operational metrics and business-level metrics that allow TA teams to justify their expenditures, get additional resources, and build an optimal function that successfully creates the next chapter of the organization. The best organizations understand how to implement and execute a reporting strategy that offers granular and high-level insights for each stakeholder type, from recruiters to the CEO.



"Data has allowed talent acquisition to move away from its administrative, order-taker role. But reporting has to be pragmatic and accessible for the organization. Sometimes the data is there, but it's not presented in a way that people can easily understand."



David Novak
Engagement Manager
Hiring Success Services

Report Builder Changes the Game at Colliers

"Data proved to be foundational in driving awareness and understanding where our gaps were. It gives us the ability to understand the trends in our recruitment business, diagnose how well things are working, and identify where the opportunities sit. SmartRecruiters is also really intuitive, so you can't get it wrong."



Ben Handyside
Director of Talent Management for EMEA
Colliers

Stages of Reporting Capability

1

ATS Built-in Dashboards

Review core KPIs and segment by locations, roles, departments, etc.

2

Report Builder

Role-based custom reports configured to business needs, automated delivery on a regular basis

3

Custom Visualization

APIs feed data from multiple sources into business intelligence tool for advanced analytics

4

People Analytics + Recruitment Data

Recruiting data linked up to employee lifecycle data such as new hire retention, tenure, and promotions

5. Trust and the New Wave of Transparency

In times of uncertainty, there's no more important word than trust. People look toward leaders in business, government, and media to help them make sense of events and provide hope for a better future.

- 77% of workers trust their employer to do what is right.¹³
- 77% of global workers feel a company's values and purpose (including sustainability, diversity, and transparency) are important when selecting an employer.¹⁴

"Business must lead [in trust] and continue to do so," say the experts at the Edelman Trust Barometer. In talent acquisition, businesses can lead in trust by offering candidates a streamlined process, fostering transparency among their teams, reporting on accurate data, and building relationships with trustworthy partners.



"Trust is best built through vulnerability and honesty. It's a two-way street. I encourage companies that are evaluating vendors to ask tough questions. Everyone needs to sleep at night knowing they made the best decision for their company."



Armando Villa

Vice President,
Commercial Enterprise
Sales for North America
SmartRecruiters

Systems Can Facilitate Transparency

Trust is magnified when teams have transparency through appropriate role-level visibility into activities and reports. Systems that facilitate transparency help teams align around a common purpose, increase accountability, and spark ideas that lead to innovation. Vendors that are available to troubleshoot problems and offer solutions based on industry best practices help recruiting teams get the most out of their systems.

- More than half of companies list Services and Customer Service (over Product Capabilities and Price) as key criteria for selecting talent acquisition systems.¹⁵



Three Layers of Trust in Talent Acquisition

Candidate—Employer Trust

- Can candidates trust that the job is being realistically pitched to them?
- Can candidates trust that they will be informed of the next steps throughout the hiring process and alerted when they are no longer under consideration?
- Can candidates trust they are being evaluated fairly against other candidates?
- Can employers trust that candidates are representing themselves accurately?

Hiring Team Trust

- Can recruiting teams trust that hiring managers are following up in a timely fashion and evaluating candidates fairly?
- Can hiring managers trust that recruiting teams are partners in realistic job scoping and sourcing strategies?
- Can hiring managers trust that recruiting teams are doing their best to capture and screen the most relevant candidates in the market with the available budget?
- Can leadership trust that both the recruiting team and the hiring team are doing their part to attract, screen, evaluate and hire the best candidates in a compliant way, and report on their activities with accuracy?

Employer—Vendor Trust

- Can the employer trust that its vendors' systems are configured to be compliant with local regulations in each location?
- Can the employer trust that its vendors will support implementations and ongoing maintenance with the same enthusiasm and attention that the sales team provided?
- Can the employer trust that the system, if utilized correctly, will deliver the results which were promised?
- Can the vendor trust that the employer's situation was accurately represented as a problem its technology can actually solve?
- Can the vendor trust that the employer will have the internal support necessary to ensure the system's successful adoption?



Data Visibility Builds Trust at Xplor Technologies

The visibility of hiring activities within SmartRecruiters combined with a structured reporting plan and Tableau dashboards helped Xplor Technologies build trust across its business.

"Data from SmartRecruiters helps us spark conversations around opportunities so that we can be better partners with the business. The ability to share the outcomes of the strategies we've implemented allows us to hold each other accountable."



Kara Ayers
Head of Global Talent Acquisition
Xplor Technologies

6. The Next Wave of Enterprise Digital Transformation

The wave of business transformation over the last several years has included an increase in digital investments that yielded positive effects.

- A KPMG survey found that 99% of executives report a positive return on digital investments.¹⁶
- Accenture research found that by activating the growth combination of data, technology and people, companies stand to gain a premium of up to 11% on top-line productivity—the ultimate driver of profitability and revenue growth.¹⁷

Digital transformation led to a new breed of systems that kept the user experience in mind. User-centricity was implemented in varying degrees, however, and as the number of systems proliferated, workers were tasked with switching between many systems daily to get work done. Additionally, some systems were designed to benefit one type of user over another. In recruiting, user experience comprises many constituents: candidates, recruiters, recruiting operations, hiring managers, and talent acquisition leaders.

The Legacy Framework Evolves into a Patchwork

Implementing cloud HCM platforms defined the most recent wave of digital transformation in HR. Bundled HCM applications were chosen by the C-suite, and talent acquisition was often left out of the decision-making process. The benefits of HCM technology for HR were immense, but TA teams quickly learned that these systems' limited recruiting functionalities held them back.



“Experience is key for everybody, not just candidates and recruiters. It’s about employees getting a good experience on internal mobility and managers being prompted to be able to do their job in the most effective way. Most hiring managers don’t like hiring. When we make it as easy for them as possible to get the right people in the door, we impact the bottom line.”



Rich Lewis Jones

Regional Vice President, APAC
SmartRecruiters

Read more from James on the [SmartRecruiters blog](#)



At other companies, legacy recruiting systems kept in place were not adapted to the data-driven, candidate-centric practices of modern hiring teams. In both cases, the solution to the core hiring system's limited functionality was often to add point solutions for specific functions like sourcing and job advertising.

The mix of non-integrated systems at many companies often creates extra administrative work for recruiters and slows down processes that the technology was meant to speed up. Compensating for functionality gaps in the legacy system created bloated processes and made accurate reporting difficult. Additionally, the patchwork of systems was found to be costly due to integration and maintenance fees.



Today's Ecosystem Approach

Consumers today use digital apps that are built to be user-friendly. From a smartphone or computer operating system, they navigate to a multitude of tools that provide specific functionality. In the same way, talent acquisition teams are beginning to adopt an ecosystem approach. By investing in a user-friendly core hiring ecosystem that makes it easy to plug-and-play additional tools, organizations centralize processes, receive transparency across tools, and promote the agility required to drive profitability in a rapidly changing world. A consumer-grade user experience across systems and devices is increasingly expected—and differentiating—for enterprise users.

Axel Springer Reduces Administrative Burden by Connecting Systems

The Axel Springer Talent Attraction team worked closely with IT to integrate SmartRecruiters with SAP, Works Council requirements, SSO, and Tableau. They reported a huge reduction in administrative upkeep, saw 38% faster feedback from hiring managers—and they enjoyed themselves in the process.

"It's fun to work on new solutions and integrations with IT, HR, and hiring managers."

axel springer —

Claudia Model
Manager, Talent Attraction
National Media & Tech
Axel Springer SE

The Way Forward for Talent Leaders

The continuing volatility of external events impacting business has been a wake-up call for organizations to future-proof their recruitment technology. Just as new hires build an organization's future, the right technology can future-proof a talent acquisition function.



Fraser's Group Future-Proofs with SmartRecruiters

"Our previous system wasn't purpose-fit for a business that needed to be agile and candidate-focused. We needed a system that matched the current need, but could also be future-proof for where we're going."

**FRASERS
GROUP**

Adam Reynolds
Head of Talent
Fraser's Group

What is Future-Proof Talent Acquisition?

Future-proof talent acquisition requires a flexible operating system that's easy to configure, integrates with best-of-breed point solutions, and offers actionable data to optimize processes. Following are the three key components of future-proof TA technology:

- **Usable:** simple to use for candidates and hiring teams
- **Flexible:** a highly configurable, all-in-one toolkit for any process
- **Connected:** seamless integrations with a marketplace of innovative apps



"SmartRecruiters provides a core TA technology foundation that helps companies change, adapt, reshape, redeploy, add to, and control. Our customers can do that themselves, at the speed they want, without dependence on us."



Paul Marchant
Regional Vice President of
Northern Europe
SmartRecruiters

Read more from Paul on the
[SmartRecruiters blog](#)

Colliers Enjoys Ease of Use

"SmartRecruiters is easy to implement and it's easy to use. We were able to deploy it across different countries, all of which were at different levels of maturity, and we were able to do it in a straightforward way."



Ben Handyside
Director of Talent Management for EMEA
Colliers

Checklists

Candidate experience checklist

Use these questions to guide your assessment of applicant tracking system capabilities.

Candidates can apply to a job or express general interest in one click and from any device (mobile, tablet, laptop, and desktop) without needing to create a UserID or system password

Candidates can apply to a job or express interest using their social profiles including LinkedIn, Indeed, and Facebook, or alternatively apply using a resume from any device

Candidates can easily search and view job ads, read applicable content, apply to jobs, and upload resumes or attachments from any device

Candidates can self-withdraw from a job, self-delete their entire application, and export their application data at any time from any device

Candidates can register and receive job alerts personalised for key terms

Candidates receive personalised messages at various stages of the application process

Candidates can change or cancel interviews from within the solution

Candidates receive digital offers that can be signed without printing or scanning

Internal candidates have all of the above capabilities and are acknowledged and differentiated from external candidates within the system

Reporting & Analytics Checklists

Use these checklists to evaluate the built-in and customizable reporting features of a talent acquisition suite.

Reporting Checklist

Access on-demand analytics reports including applications report, jobs report, positions report, job fields report, hiring team reports, and interviews report that require no configuration / setup for consumption

Access on-demand reports for time-to-hire & time-to-start reports filterable by recruiter, hiring manager, location, department, and job function

All in-product reports can be downloaded in 1-click to .CSV format

Build, export and schedule on-demand, ad hoc reports that are downloadable from within the solution in .CSV format

Schedule ad-hoc, customized reports for delivery on a standard or custom cadence.

Ad-hoc reports can be assembled within the solution, as well as within a preferred reporting tool

Role-based permissions for restricted data fields in both on-demand and ad-hoc reports

On-demand compliance reports including applicant flow, diversity, EEO and OFCCP reports

On-demand headcount plan reports comparing hiring performance against hiring plan goals.

Access to a reporting API for greater providing greater control for managing ad hoc and scheduled reports

A personal data mart that provides access to historical data on all candidates, jobs, user data, etc. that supports downstream reporting and analysis using internal BI tools such as Tableau, Looker, or Power BI.

Analytics Checklist

Home page with an overview of pipeline numbers, upcoming interviews, updates to saved searches, etc

Filterable, in-product analytic dashboards that include sourcing, pipeline, historic pipeline, and hiring plan metrics

“Job details” analytic dashboard for each requisition showing an overview of all key metrics: candidate pipeline, ad spend, sourcing performance, and top candidates

Sourcing analytics provide a performance comparison among all source channels (career pages, job boards, staffing agencies, referrals).

Cost-per-applicant, interview, and cost-per-hire analytics that capture global spend: job board spend, staffing agency, assessments, video interviews, background checks, etc.

Current candidate pipeline analytics showing the number of candidates in each step of the hiring process

Track, analyze, and report on referral analytics for identifying best sources of applicant referrals

Historical candidate pipeline analytics showing historical average number of candidates in each step of the hiring process

Built-in hiring plan analytics that display how long it takes to hire candidates, the lead time between hire and start dates, and the number of hires that start on time.

Access to analytics API enabling all analytic endpoints and data to be extracted for further manipulation and analysis

Employer Brand Questions

Ask these questions to maximize your employer brand investment.

- What do we know about visitors to our career site? How do we know that they can find what they're looking for?
- Does the application process deliver on the promise of our employer brand by facilitating a positive candidate experience? If not, what can we improve?
- How much information is shared among the teams running the career site, job advertising, and core recruitment processes? What opportunities exist for more collaboration?
- What data can we connect across the career site, job advertising, and core recruitment processes? What does it tell us about our ROI?

Future-proof TA checklist

Use this checklist to help determine the future-readiness of a core recruitment system

Is the system easy to configure and maintain without extensive IT development?

Can we reconfigure processes quickly as we adapt to external changes that impact recruiting?

Can we integrate with point solutions without add-on fees?

Can we access actionable reporting that helps us optimise on an ongoing basis?

Can we access centralised analytics across our ecosystem of integrations?

Will we be able to easily pilot new solutions by selecting from a best-of-breed vendor marketplace?

About this Ebook

Author

[Lee Ann Prescott](#), Senior Content Marketing Manager

Additional Resources

[SmartRecruiters Blog](#)

Read our blog to find actionable advice, practical wisdom, and insights from hiring experts on today's most relevant topics.

[A Seat at the Table: Guide to Leading a Strategic Talent Acquisition Function](#)

This practical, 14-page guide is full of tips and tools to help you lead your talent acquisition function away from being considered a cost center and becoming the strategic function it deserves to be.

[Guide to Evaluating the Business Value of a Talent Acquisition Platform](#)

To help you build the business case for your technology investments, this 23-page guide offers a high-level overview of business drivers for talent acquisition and offers 11 ways to save money and build efficiency.

[Hiring Success: How Visionary CEOs Compete for the Best Talent](#)

In this easy-to-read book, SmartRecruiters founder Jerome Ternynck offers 30 years of learnings and differentiated recruiting strategies that have transformed the way companies hire. Senior leaders will walk away with strategies to attract, select, and hire the best talent on demand and within budget.

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See SmartRecruiters in Action

SmartRecruiters enables Hiring Without Boundaries™ by freeing talent acquisition teams from the shackles of legacy applicant tracking software. SmartRecruiters' next-generation platform serves as the hiring operating system for 4,000 customers like Bosch, LinkedIn, Skechers, and Visa. Companies with business-critical hiring needs turn to SmartRecruiters for best-of-breed functionality, world-class support, and a robust ecosystem of third-party applications and service providers.

For more information, follow us at [@SmartRecruiters](#), on [LinkedIn](#) or visit us at [smartrecruiters.com](#).