

RECRUITING IN THE AGE OF RECORD-LOW UNEMPLOYMENT

Recruiting strategies to use in
a candidate-driven market



Presented by:

HR Daily Advisor



ABOUT THE REPORT

Throughout 2018, the unemployment rate hovered around 4% and continues to remain at the lowest levels it's been in decades. Jobseekers are currently in the driver's seat and are being more selective about potential job opportunities. Because of this, employers must turn to more passive candidates and look at long-term goals and strategies to acquire top talent.

The *HR Daily Advisor* research team conducted a survey throughout February 2019 to take a snapshot of the real-world recruiting landscape. In our fifth annual recruiting survey, which features data from over **530 respondents**, we sought to uncover recruiting trends among employers nationwide.

This report highlights which recruiting strategies are most popular, how successful employers are at recruiting talent, and much more.

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RECRUITING STRATEGIES OVERVIEW

While low unemployment is great for the job market and U.S. economy, it does present some unique challenges for employers—which means having a recruiting strategy in place is more important than ever.

We asked respondents to best describe their recruiting strategies, and the **most common response was “It varies depending on the position being filled,”** which has consistently been the top choice over the last few years, including this year, at 38%.

The second most common description of recruiting strategies was a **“combination of both cultural habit and a written strategy” (29%)**. No matter what the strategy entails, very few employers—6%—report that their strategy is fully documented, and on the flip side, roughly **10% report having no strategy at all**.

PREVALENT MEANS OF RECRUITING

79% say
“Company Websites”
are the **best way** to
recruit talent.



78% use
“Employee Referrals,”
in conjunction with
company websites.



75% use
“Online Job Boards,”
like Monster.com and
Glassdoor.



62% say
“Word of Mouth”
works, too.



60% use
“Online Communities,”
like LinkedIn and
Spoke.



51% use
“Social Media,”
like Facebook and
Twitter.



RECRUITING STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

Using social media to recruit seems like a no-brainer when you think of Facebook's new tool, Facebook Careers, but it hasn't always been that popular.

In our inaugural survey from 2015, roughly 33% of respondents used these platforms to recruit talent. In 2016, that number rose to 37% and has continued to climb to 42% in 2017 and to 48% in 2018, with **over half (51%) of respondents** now using these channels today.

With technology dominating most of the way we live and work, it should come as no surprise that technology has changed the way we recruit. In 2015, print-version job advertisements were cited as the fifth (49%) most-used method to recruit talent, but in 2019, this strategy has fallen to tenth place, with just 32% of respondents saying they continue to use print ads.

In fact, more employers (48%) would choose to recruit from job/career fairs than to resort to print job ads, and 34% would turn to staffing agencies, as return on investment is on the decline in print media.



ATTRACTING TALENT THROUGH BENEFITS

The most popular benefits are of little surprise. Alas, many employers are starting to realize that offering these top five basics just isn't enough, which is why many are starting to turn to trendy benefits—in conjunction with their standard benefits package—to attract top talent.

These benefits include **wellness programs (47%)**, **tuition reimbursement (45%)**, and **flexible schedules (44%)**.

Gone are the days when free food was enough to hook a candidate, as only 33% of respondents say they offer this benefit. Gym memberships are also declining in popularity (29%), which could be attributed to the rise of wellness programs.

Paternity leave for new fathers is a trend we'll continue to hear about as the discussion over paid leave intensifies, and some employers are already starting to prepare, with 25% of respondents saying they already offer this benefit.

TOP 5 BENEFITS USED TO ATTRACT TALENT

1. Healthcare insurance



2. Dental insurance



3. Paid time off



4. Life insurance



5. Retirement savings/401(k) plans



FOCUSING ON CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

As we know, the candidate experience—the experience you’re offering candidates from the minute they first hear about your company to the minute an offer is made—can make or break your recruiting efforts and have a lasting impact on your company. When a candidate has a bad experience with your company, he or she is more likely to tell friends and family not to do business with you.

Fortunately, respondents are aware of this, as **79% say it is “extremely” or “very important”** in their recruiting process, while only 14% feel it’s only “somewhat important.” Furthermore, **5% of respondents say they don’t focus on the candidate experience**, and almost 2% don’t think the candidate experience is important at all.

For the employers that do not currently focus on candidate experience or don’t find it that important, we have some great news! Based on your peers’ responses, you can easily implement an experience-focused strategy!

3 POPULAR BEST PRACTICES FOR A MEMORABLE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

- 1** Constantly communicate with candidates at every step of the hiring process. **72%**
- 2** Highlight benefits of working for the company through job descriptions and company career pages. **65%**
- 3** Emphasize the company culture through the company’s career website or jobs page. **59%**

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO CREATE A MEMORABLE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

51%

Making the application mobile-friendly



Conveying the importance of career development to jobseekers

38%

30%

Constantly monitoring reviews on Glassdoor to see where improvement is needed



One respondent's company even offers candidate experience training to those involved in the hiring process—with more employers realizing the importance of this experience, this could be a trend-setting practice!

HANDLING CANDIDATE GHOSTING DURING RECRUITMENT

Candidate experience is great in theory, but no matter how great of an experience you provide, it may never be enough to stop candidate ghosting. Candidate ghosting—when a candidate stops communicating during the recruiting process—is pretty common, according to the research findings, as **58% of respondents report being ghosted at some point**.

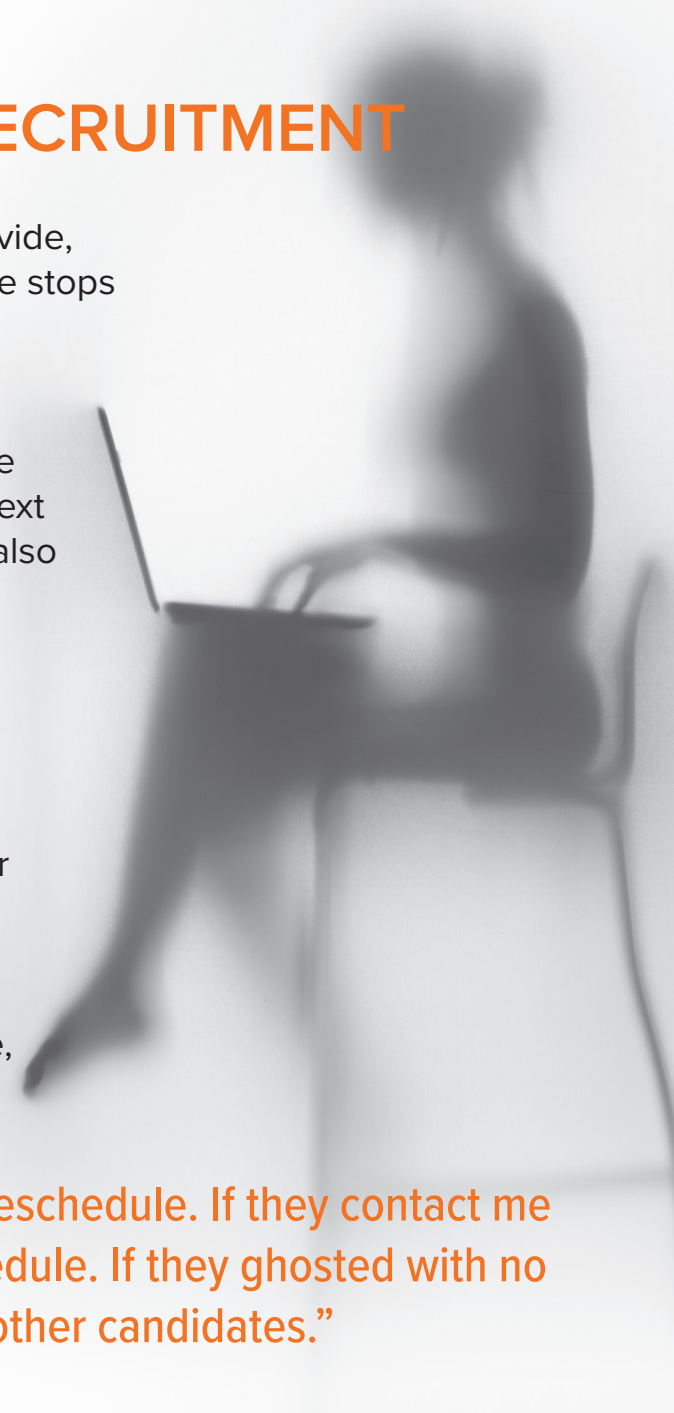
In an open-ended response, respondents were asked to share how they handled candidate ghosting. The most common method was reaching out a few times and moving on to the next candidate in line if he or she never responds. What's interesting is that many respondents also chose to “red flag” or note that the candidate ghosted the company and should not be considered for future job openings.

Ghosting strategies seem to vary when it comes to the situation and the position. Many respondents said if the candidate was entry level, they would just cut ties and move on, but if the candidate applied for a senior-level/executive role, respondents would put in a greater effort to reach out. This makes sense given that the average cost per hire is greater and the time to fill is longer for these positions based on finding candidates who have the right skill set—but we'll discuss metrics later.

It is important to have a plan in place for what you will do if you are ghosted by a candidate, but you should place a greater emphasis on providing a great candidate experience to reduce your chances of being ghosted.

“If there was a miscommunication in the date/time of an interview, I would reschedule. If they contact me explaining that something happened (had to work later, etc.) I would reschedule. If they ghosted with no further communication or explanation from them[,] I move on to other candidates.”

—Survey Respondent



ONLINE RECRUITING STRATEGIES

86% use online recruiting as part of their overall recruiting strategy

In fact, over half of all respondents use online recruiting to find entry-level (**58%**), professional (**56%**), and mid-level (**53%**) talent. Furthermore, a quarter of respondents (**25%**) use online recruiting methods to find talent at **all levels**.

However, has online recruiting been successful?

58% have the best chances of finding *entry-level workers*

This is followed by **46%** who have success recruiting mid-level talent and **43%** who are successful finding professional talent. Only **14%** of respondents say online recruiting has been a successful method for finding skilled talent at **all levels**.

The Internet has various avenues to recruit from, including social media, job boards, company-owned career pages, and much more.

So, which outlet is most preferred?

ONLINE RECRUITING STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

Last year, just 78% of respondents said they post jobs on their company website, while 72% used job boards like Monster or CareerBuilder.

This year, slightly more employers posted jobs on their career website (84%), which remains the most popular outlet for online job posting; however, the jump in percentage of those using job boards rose significantly, to 83%.

Company-owned career sites remain popular (84%) for job postings

Meanwhile, online communities—like LinkedIn—came in third (68%), followed by social media, at 55%.

University job boards are also another popular option, cited by 49% of respondents, and 34% of respondents also rely on trade association websites to post jobs. While more employers chose to post jobs to their career websites, far more respondents (65%) say they have more success finding candidates through postings that were listed on job boards than through their company website (46%).

In an open-ended response, many respondents said that job boards provided them with a large candidate pool. Those who had success recruiting from their company website said that it gave candidates the opportunity to learn more about the company culture, resulting in successful hires.

As for online communities like LinkedIn, respondents said this method helps to recruit passive candidates and makes it easier for recruiters to communicate with all candidates.

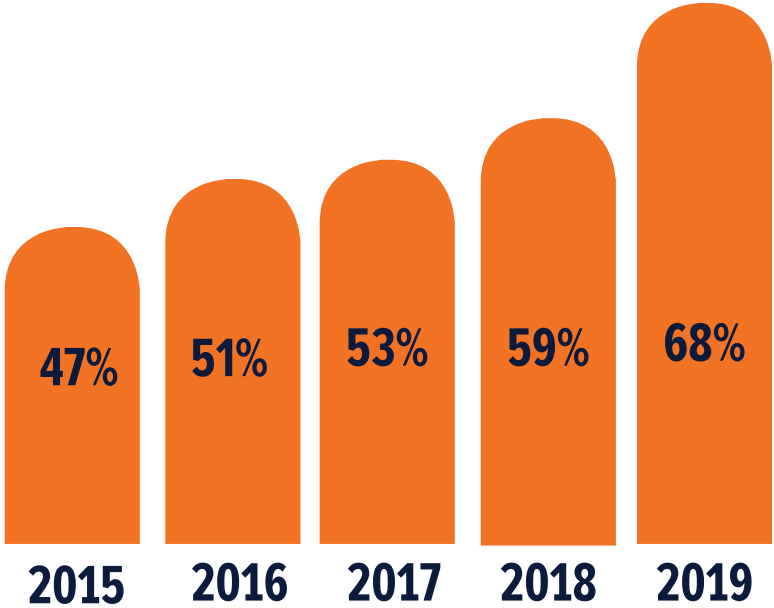
“LinkedIn is becoming a game changer and helps with market data as in how many candidates are actually out there.”

—Survey Respondent

ONLINE RECRUITING STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

Could LinkedIn and other online communities really become the recruiting method of the future?

If we look back at past survey results, we can see that this method is slowly gaining in popularity.



Talk is cheap, right? So, can respondents back up their claims of having hiring success through their online recruiting strategies?

Yes, they can!

HOW SUCCESSFUL IS ONLINE RECRUITING?

In 2017, 27% of respondents said that most—76% to 100%—of their jobs were filled by online applicants, with another 20% saying 50% to 75% were, which means less than half (47%) reported that the majority of their jobs were filled by online applicants. However, in 2019, **these numbers have dramatically increased.**

As the research shows, online career websites, communities, and job boards are a great way for employers to get their brand out to a wider audience while attracting top talent in the process.

However, given the tight labor market, getting applicants to apply at your company isn't always that easy. This made us wonder: **How many employers search for, and review, potential candidates who've posted their résumés online?**

57% admit to searching through posted résumés of applicants **who have not applied** to their company.

36% say **75% of jobs** are filled by online applicants.

33% say **50% to 75%** of jobs are filled by online applicants.

69% say **50% to 100%** of jobs are filled by online applicants.

This statistic has fluctuated since 2015, when **only 41%** of respondents claimed to search for candidates; **in 2016, 47%** of respondents made this claim.

The figure **jumped to 53% in 2017**, rose again to **57% in 2018**, and remained steady this year.

While employers see the value in online recruiting, whether it's for brand recognition or to find top talent, it makes you wonder if employers will go "scorched Earth" on the recruiting process and turn to strictly online recruiting in the future.

ONLINE RECRUITING SUCCESS

Interestingly, **only 38% have abandoned past practices/methods in favor of online recruiting**, though not surprisingly, this is the highest percentage of respondents among all of our surveys who answered yes to the question “*Have you eased off other methods of recruiting in favor of online recruiting?*” Another **31% say this is simply another recruiting strategy** and they haven’t used it as a replacement for other methods.

While online recruiting hasn’t completely dominated the recruiting process, it is taking over some outdated practices. For example, **45% of respondents say they have chosen to replace traditional print ads with online recruiting methods**. Furthermore, **22% say they have stopped using staffing firms**, and **19% have stopped using headhunters in general** in favor of online recruiting.



PROS AND CONS OF ONLINE RECRUITING

As we can see, online recruiting has become preferable to other outdated hiring practices, but it does have its pros and cons.

TOP 3 PROS AND CONS

PROS

- 1** **62%** say the biggest “pro” to online recruiting is a tie between increased exposure to a wider candidate pool and ease of use.
- 2** **61%** also say that online recruiting gives them the ability to reach out to passive candidates.
- 3** **55%** say that it allows them to have shorter hiring times.

CONS

- 1** **71%** say the biggest “con” to online recruiting is it results in too many unqualified candidates.
- 2** **27%** also say that online recruiting can lead to spam applications.
- 3** **26%** say that it can lead to too many candidates in general.*

*Additionally, respondents say that online recruiting can get expensive, as 13% report that the cost for online recruiting is “too high.”



SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING

Social media recruiting, another aspect of online recruiting, has been reported as another trend that's gaining in popularity—but our survey respondents say otherwise.

According to 39% of respondents, interacting with candidates via social media websites like Facebook and Twitter just isn't that important. Only 35% of respondents think it is "somewhat important," while just 13% think it is "very important." More evidence comes from the **only 25% of respondents who say their organization encourages social media interaction between hiring managers and potential hires.**

Apparently, social media interaction is a two-way street, as a majority of respondents (**52%**) claim that candidates will "sometimes, but not often," reach out to them. Sadly, only **21%** of respondents say that candidates interact with them on social media "often" or "all the time."

While experts claim that social media recruiting is the "future of hiring," our respondents think otherwise. In fact, a majority of **80%** agree that **they will not be abandoning traditional methods** in favor of social media recruiting anytime soon.

RECRUITING THROUGH COMPANY CAREER WEBSITES

While social media recruiting hasn't taken off completely, one popular method of online recruiting is using a company's career website or jobs page.

As mentioned, company websites (84%) are the most popular means of recruiting.

51% SAY THEIR CAREER PAGE OR WEBSITE PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THEIR RECRUITING PROGRAM.

MOST COMMON CAREER PAGE/WEBSITE FEATURES

1



Job descriptions 82%

2



Application forms 73%

3



Résumé delivery 63%

For truly successful career sites, you should also consider having other features, like quotes (currently only being utilized by 22% of respondents) or video testimonials from current employees (12%). We also asked respondents to open up about other features their sites have, and many commented that they highlight their company culture.

We've covered which strategies work best for attracting talent to your company, but what happens after you've reeled them in?

And better yet, what happens when the candidate comes back and asks for more money than what you're offering?

NEGOTIATING THE JOB OFFER

When it comes to salary negotiations, a majority of respondents say they are open to negotiating salaries as part of the initial job offer, but there is one minor caveat: According to **74%** of respondents, they are **open to negotiating salaries, but it depends on the position**. However, 18% say they're open to negotiate salaries at every level, while 9% say they do not negotiate at all—or as one respondent put it—“they accept what we offer, or we move on to the next candidate in line.”

When it comes to **negotiating incentive pay**, most respondents, again, said yes, but it depends on the position (59%), while 33% are unwilling to budge, saying they would pursue another candidate in lieu of negotiation.

What's most surprising about negotiating the initial job offer is that most respondents were willing to negotiate salary and incentive pay (depending on the position), but **69% are unwilling to negotiate benefits**.

We understand that some benefits—such as health insurance and retirement plans, to name a few—are difficult to negotiate because of the way they're structured for the company, but it's interesting that a majority are even unwilling to negotiate time off and work schedules.

For the 22% of respondents who say they do negotiate benefits, the top five benefits to negotiate are:

- 1 Paid time off (PTO): the amount of vacation, sick, and/or personal leave (69%)**
- 2 Work schedule: hours of work (58%)**
- 3 Work schedule: days of work (49%)**
- 4 Sign-on bonuses (44%)**
- 5 Telecommuting (43%)**

RECRUITING TECHNOLOGY

Having a recruiting strategy in place is always a good starting point in the hiring process, but how do you know if that strategy is effective? This is where metrics come into play. One way to keep track of your metrics is to utilize artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and other recruiting software.

But unfortunately, 51% of respondents say they aren't currently using any recruiting software to track their hiring outcomes. For those who are using such software, we were curious to learn about which platforms were the most popular.

TOP 3 RECRUITING PLATFORMS



While we're on the topic of AI in the recruiting process, **an astounding 95%** of respondents say **they currently do not use any AI (other than recruiting software) in their hiring process.** While AI has been reportedly gaining in popularity, our survey shows that it hasn't really made a dent in anyone's recruiting efforts.

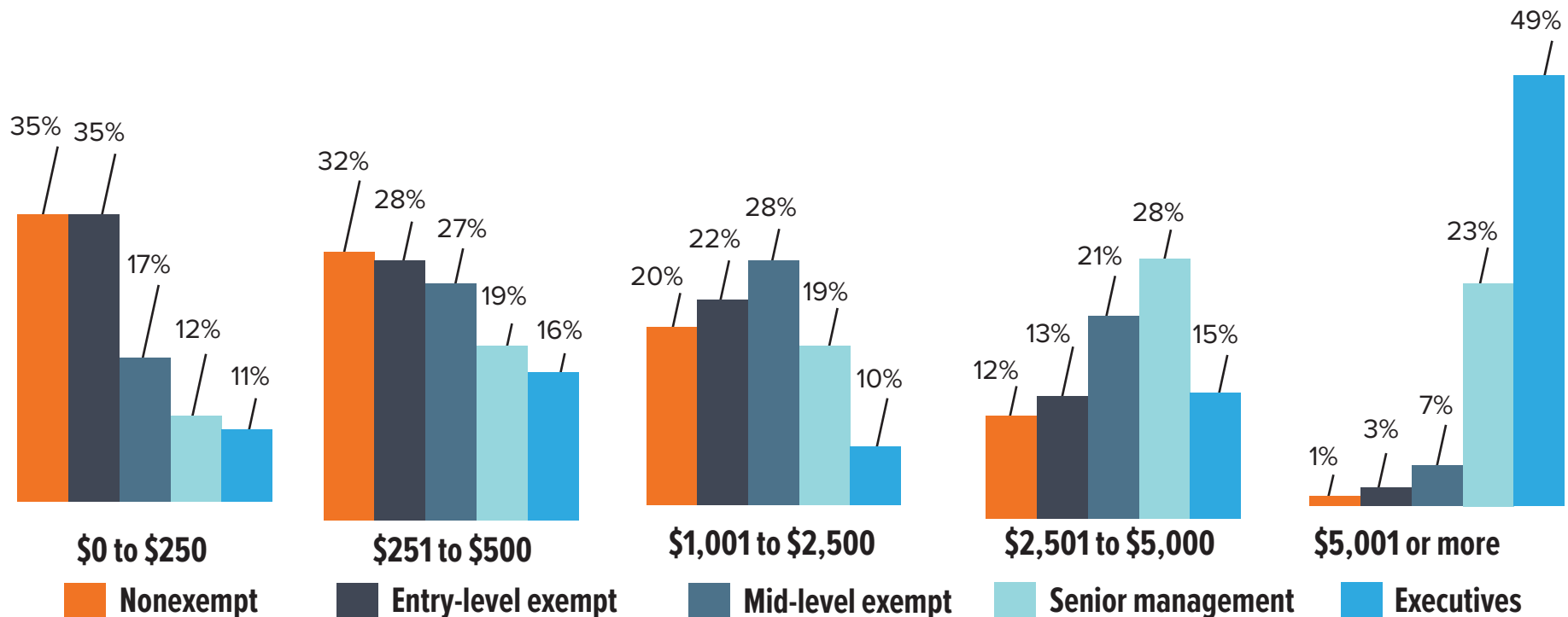
However, for the 5% of respondents who do utilize AI, *the most popular way is using scheduling assistance software to set up interviews and phone screenings (41%).* Others (30%) use chatbots to communicate with jobseekers, and 15% use AI to conduct video interviews.

TRACKING RECRUITING METRICS

For some industries/employers, AI may not be that important just yet, but as technology continues to evolve, we predict that more employers will start using recruiting technology in the future—especially once they see how much easier their jobs will become. Although tracking your recruiting metrics is a great way to see if your hiring process is effective, **when it comes to tracking the “cost per hire,” only 27% of respondents actually keep track of these data.**

We’ve spent a lot of time focusing on online recruiting practices, so it only makes sense that we would inquire about the cost per hire for online recruiting. Most respondents (35%) report that online recruiting is actually cheaper than other methods. Ten percent say they have found it to be **more expensive**—but the lowest figure we’ve seen for this response over prior years. Some respondents (34%) say that the cost is about the same, while 6% of respondents claim to not track this metric.

When it comes to **general cost-per-hire metrics**, our respondents share the average costs for each employee level:



TRACKING METRICS, CONTINUED

Another valuable metric to track is “**time to fill**,” the number of days from requisition approval to when the candidate accepts an offer. Sadly, **a majority of respondents (52%) do not track this metric**, though doing so could provide them with opportunities to tweak their current processes and potentially save money.

For the **48%** of respondents who do track this metric, most reported that nonexempt positions (**58%**) and entry-level exempt positions (**53%**) are filled in under 30 days, while the majority of mid-level, exempt positions are filled between 31–60 days (**65%**) and most senior management positions are filled either between 46–60 or 60 or more days (**62%**). Finally, over half of respondents (**55%**) said that it takes 60+ days to fill executive positions.

Continuing on with the “no, we don’t track that” trend is quality of hire; **67%** of respondents don’t track this metric either. However, quality of hire is a bit more difficult to track (so we understand).

For the **33%** of respondents *who do track quality of hire*, the metric most often tracked by far is “new hire turnover/retention” at **91%**, followed by “hiring management satisfaction”—though we’re not sure specifically how this is measured—at **59%** and “average performance rating of new hires vs. standard employee performance,” cited by **46%**.

It seems we’re batting 1,000 on tracking metrics, but we were curious to find out what other metrics respondents tracked.

OTHER METRICS TRACKED

While 44% say they do not track other metrics, *for those who do*, here were the most notable:

- Effectiveness of sources—that is, comparing which job posting resource performed better, i.e., your own job board vs. an internal reference vs. a print ad—**35%**
- Candidate experience—**24%**
- Interview-to-hire ratio—**21%**
- Offer-to-acceptance ratio—**18%**

FINAL THOUGHTS

With record-low unemployment, employers nationwide are beginning to understand the importance of recruiting strategies when looking for top talent. However, our research shows that there is still work to be done when it comes to keeping track of how well your hiring process is going.

By using these research findings, to determine where you stand in relation to peer organizations, you can improve your current recruiting program and stand out among the competition.

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SURVEY METHODOLOGY

HR Daily Advisor conducts its surveys using the Survey Monkey® platform. This survey was taken by 533 adults who specialize in recruiting and Human Resources. Specific job titles, regions, company sizes, and industries were all widely ranged.

Data were not weighed and only represent those who completed the survey. The survey was incentivized and was conducted during February 2019. A complete set of data is not represented here. Only results that were deemed to be of interest were reported.

