

Going Beyond Applicant Tracking

Best Practices in Talent Management:
Factors in ATS Selection



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Effective talent management begins with understanding the true value of talent to an organization. People costs account for 70 percent of the total cost of doing business—and with good reason. It's people who create business plans, develop new products and services, answer customer service calls and ring up purchases at the cash register. *Because people are the most valuable resource in any organization, it's a competitive necessity to have the best processes in place to attract, hire, train, and retain the best employees.* But you also need to have the right system in place to keep track of your recruiting processes and your people.

Whether you are in the market for a new applicant tracking system or you're a first-time buyer, keep in mind that one size does not fit all. The right system can streamline your workflow process, speed time-to-fill and save thousands of dollars in administrative costs – all the while helping you populate your organization with the right people in the right places. An ATS that doesn't fit your organization's needs can disrupt your workflow process, cost you time, productivity and competitive advantage as other companies snap up the best job candidates. So to help you better select the right ATS for your organization, consider these five guidelines.

An applicant tracking system should:



Address the forgotten applicant experience.

The logical assumption in acquiring an ATS is that there will be applicants to track, yet the applicant is typically not a consideration when companies are choosing a vendor. *Remember that the first word in "Applicant Tracking System" is applicant – they are the true customers of your recruitment function.* "If you want high application and offer acceptance rates," says recruiting guru Dr. John Sullivan, you need to "learn how to duplicate the level of customer

service that is usually provided by the sales, customer support, and product service departments." That means taking into account the needs, preferences and other demographic considerations of your targeted workforce—BEFORE you buy an ATS.

Applicants will often get their first impressions of employment with your company from your career site and, if still interested, from the online application process. Is the career site easy for candidates to navigate? Can the ATS you are considering integrate with your career site? Can the ATS help you screen and communicate with applicants, and funnel strong applicants to the right hiring manager? Is your application process appropriate for the computer fluency, age and culture of your target demographic? Does the ATS enable hiring managers to communicate swiftly and regularly to applicants during the hiring process? A prospect who does not feel welcomed or wanted is unlikely to stick around long enough to complete the application process. On the other hand, a candidate who considers your site intuitive and can easily find job opportunities and apply for them could become one of your brand's biggest advocates as they share their experience with other job seekers.



Provide true hourly and salaried talent acquisition solutions.

An ATS creates streamlined, efficient processes within the talent acquisition function—but only if it's the right system for your company. It's critical to know what you need before shopping for an ATS. *If you're in the retail or hospitality markets, or in any industry that hires a*

significant portion of hourly workers, make sure the ATS you are considering is an enterprise-level system that can be configured to attract, screen, recruit and hire both hourly and salaried populations. Very few vendors have solutions for both hourly and salaried employees AND that can meet the needs of small and large businesses alike. Much of the acquisition activity going on now in the ATS space comes as vendors realize that their solutions are incomplete.

For example, a national auto parts chain considered its staffing needs and overhauled the way it hired employees, purchasing and configuring a system that could process where they can upload a resume and pre-screen themselves with a short questionnaire. As a result, the company has seen a dramatic increase in the number of hourly candidates, and a 20 percent reduction in time-to-fill for corporate jobs.



Configure to efficient recruiting and hiring workflow processes.

“Efficient” is the operative word here. Companies that cling to inefficient, cobbled-together recruiting processes do so because “that’s the way we’ve always done it” or because they fear change and are doomed from the start. If your current application process requires applicants to print a form from your career site and mail

it to corporate headquarters where it is then copied in triplicate and faxed to the right department – or if you’re still using e-mail and spreadsheets to track your applicants – then your processes are probably inefficient and costly. *Carefully re-view your processes to make sure they are worth retaining, and then find an ATS that can be configured to work with them and improve them.*

For instance, the ATS should be able to accommodate a company’s various user roles (your end-users). You may have internal recruiters, hiring managers, store managers, warehouse managers and corporate management who all use the system. The store may have ongoing open job

requisitions at an individual location, while at the corporate level, a job req must be created, approved and properly routed. These are quite different processes, and the ATS needs to be able to handle them both. And the warehouse manager may need to quickly schedule a drug screening and background screening; is the ATS you’re considering flexible enough for your needs? Do you also need an ATS that can help with performance management and succession planning at corporate headquarters?



Include recruiting, screening, hiring and retention components.

“Applicant Tracking System” is a bit of a misnomer these days, as systems have advanced to track the “applicant” through the entire employment life cycle, not just through the recruitment or hiring phase (hence the term

talent management). *Organizations can now include background checks, drug screenings, paperless on-boarding technology, career planning, learning management, performance management, succession planning and more in their “talent management” suite.* Each company’s needs will differ, so it’s best to find a configurable system rather than having to buy an as-is system with components you don’t need but are forced to pay for anyway.

Choose your features carefully, considering the ramifications both in the short and long term. Think ahead to what your organization may need in the future, as well as what added benefits certain other features may hold. A large retail company switched to a paperless hiring and on-boarding system that included prescreening, qualifying, testing, scoring, data gathering, online forms (such as FCRA and WOTC), status checking, and applicant support. This “paperless” process reduced the amount of administrative work involved in their recruiting process and saved reams of paper—and almost a quarter of a million dollars—in the process.



5 Drive the organization's business strategies and bottom line growth.

All the different business units that drive an organization forward—R & D, marketing, sales, etc.—are powered by people. And your “people” help drive the business metrics that provide real value to the enterprise – i.e., sales per employee. Having

the right people in place at the right time helps drive these goals and growth. *The recruiting, selection, training, development, and succession planning functions must then align with your company's strategic business plan.* Recruiting is then strategic and therefore truly becomes a business function.

Acquiring an ATS or replacing your current system is about more than streamlining processes, then. Before they acquired an ATS, a global medical manufacturer's HR staff was spending 16 hours a week manually tracking applicants—time they could be using to fill positions. Entering applicant data manually did not bring value to the company, so switching to an ATS was a logical business decision, and the time saved could be reinvested in marketing and sales to spur new growth. And a regional medical center saved \$50,000 annually in administrative costs by switching from a manual system to an ATS—money

that can be reinvested toward its own bottom line: perhaps hiring more prestigious doctors or building a new research facility.

Apply these five guidelines when evaluating ATS vendors. Yes, there are many vendors to choose from, and they're all making similar promises, but keep in mind that only a few can truly deliver an enterprise-level system to accommodate both hourly and salaried candidates. In fact, we recommend skipping the old-fashioned RFP process. Instead, *define what your technical and key stakeholder requirements are and always require real-time demonstrations, giving the vendors “organizational recruiting and hiring” scenarios to speak to directly.* How will their systems streamline your workflow process, speed time-to-fill, save thousands of dollars in administrative costs – all the while helping you populate your organization with the right people in the right places?

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All the examples used in this white paper are satisfied nowHIRE customers, which you can read more about at http://www.nowhire.com/WhitePapers_Research.htm.

nowHIRE: A COMPLETE ATS APPROACH



Since 1998, nowHIRE has been a premier provider of applicant tracking systems for companies of every size and in every vertical imaginable. Their industry-defining solutions feature fully integrated, Web-based recruiting and applicant tracking software modules that allows companies to configure the software to their specific recruiting needs – whether it be for hourly, salaried, internal, contingent, recruitment-based employees or any combination thereof. nowHIRE's solutions provide an easier, faster, better way to approach talent acquisition to give companies what they call “Zoom” – the competitive edge.