Employ Recruiter Nation Report 2024

Empowering_ People-tirst Recruiting

employ



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Report Introduction

The world of hiring has seen dramatic change over the last several years with a continued evolution in the labor market that has completely altered how we live and work. Pivoting continuously to keep up has become the norm for Talent Acquisition teams. It is no wonder that Talent Acquisition teams are adopting AI to augment manual tasks and leveraging analytics to help free up time to focus on strategic initiatives, including improving the candidate experience, fostering employer brand, and creating a people-first recruitment experience.

In this report, we'll take a close look at the challenges and opportunities teams have seen in the past year and recruiting metrics that can help talent teams benchmark how they stack up compared to other organizations and industry standards. We'll also explore the outlook for the future of recruiting and takeaways to help you thrive in 2025.

Whether you are a business leader who wears multiple hats at a small company or are part of a Talent Acquisition team supporting an enterprise that is rapidly evolving, the Employ Recruiter Nation Report 2024 offers insights that will help scale your business and solutions for both simple and complex needs. It also aims to share insights that allow you to continually and confidently refine your approach to create a truly people-first hiring strategy.

An Altered Reality

It is no wonder that Talent Acquisition teams are adopting AI to augment manual tasks and leveraging analytics to help free up time to focus on strategic initiatives, including improving the candidate experience, fostering employer brand, and creating a people-first recruitment experience.



Key Findings

Overall, the research found a stabilization in Talent Acquisition teams' ability to handle challenges and in recruiting industry optimism.

- The top three business challenges in 2024 and 2023 were felt by one-third of respondents, which dropped significantly from an average of 55% in 2022.
- A little over half of recruiters found their jobs to be more stressful in 2024 (54%) and 2023 (53%) from the year prior, dropping from 65% in 2022.
- Fifty-one percent of talent professionals believe that hiring new employees within the next 12 months will be "very challenging or somewhat challenging" —a decrease of 6% from last year and 10% from 2022.
- 92% are optimistic about the future of recruiting.

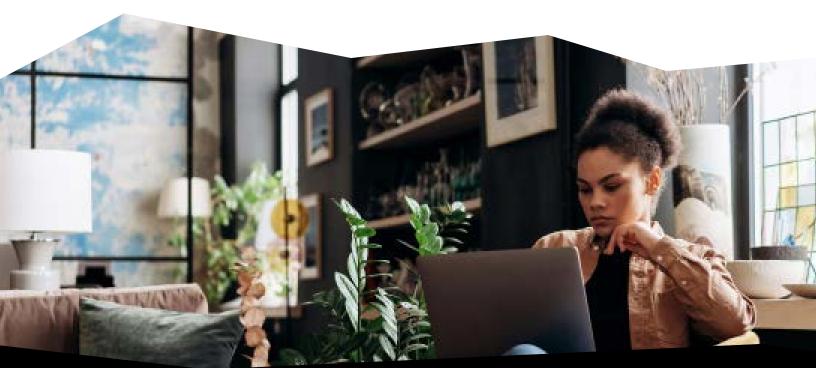
54%

A little over half of recruiters found their jobs to be more stressful in 2024.



92%

92% of Talent Acquisition decision makers are optimistic about the future of recruiting.



Organizations have made significant investments in recent years to make hiring processes more flexible and help recruiters efficiently find and hire the best candidates. These investments are expected to continue.

- Time to fill requisitions dropped by seven days, from 48 days to 41 days.
- 89% of recruiters using AI to augment the recruiting process are using it frequently or very frequently.
- 64% expect to increase recruiting budgets in the next six to 12 months.
- 64% of that group expect to increase their investment in new recruitment technology processes.

All this good news doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement or that challenges inherent to recruiting have disappeared. Results identified a big opportunity for Talent Acquisition teams to save more hours each week by leveraging technology that supports a more people-first hiring experience, while tackling manual reporting and analytics gaps.

• 84% are using analytics, but yet 87% are still using spreadsheets to track key data and outcomes.

Let's delve into the details behind these numbers and see all the data uncovered that will help you build your people-first talent acquisition strategy. 64% expect to increase recruiting budgets in the next six to 12 months.

Average time to fill in days.



Challenges and Opportunities

Last year, we saw a significant drop in the percentage of respondents identifying top business recruiting challenges and recruiter stress levels compared to 2022—and this drop has remained steady this year.

This corresponds with findings that showcase businesses have focused on making the hiring process more flexible by ensuring it is faster, incorporating AI-powered technologies, and providing remote and hybrid work over the last two years.

The net is: the more flexible the hiring process, the less stressful it is for hiring teams, which ultimately increases productivity.

Plus opportunities abound for organizations to tap into AI and analytics technology to keep evolving a more flexible hiring process.

While the shift towards data-driven recruitment is already happening and happening fast, most companies are still relying on basic tools like spreadsheets to benchmark recruiting efforts. Leveling up reporting and analytics informs the hiring process and ensures better decisions, quickly.

Using analytics technology coupled with AI to handle time-consuming tasks like candidate matching and sourcing, Talent Acquisition teams can gain hours back in their days to focus on connecting with the right candidates.

We're already seeing this impact play out in our benchmark data, with the average time for companies to fill requisitions dropping by seven days, going from 48 days in 2023 to 41 days in 2024.

Talent Acquisition teams are also leaning into social media to reach candidates where they are engaging and grow their employer brand. A strong employer brand drives not only more applicants but also the quality of candidates received, so growing your employer brand is just as important to how you address internal challenges.



"Hearts and minds are won and lost in the acquisition process. That's why a people-first experience is so essential. Giving Talent Acquisition teams more time to focus on building employer brand and cultivating relationships with candidates will positively impact both short- and long-term business results."

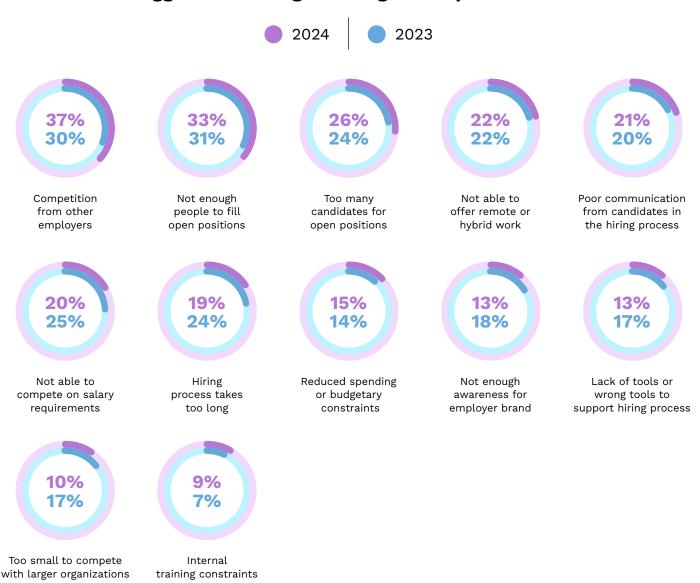
Stephanie Manzelli, CHRO, Employ

Business Challenges

The most significant challenges businesses face today were shared by one-third of respondents: competition for talent from other employers (37% in 2024 versus 30% in 2023), not enough people to fill open positions (33% in 2024 versus 31% in 2023), and too many candidates applying for open positions (26% in 2024 versus 24% in 2023).

Talent Acquisition decision makers also indicated not being able to offer remote or hybrid work (22%), poor communication from candidates in the hiring process (21%), and not being able to compete on salary requirements (20%) as top challenges their companies face when hiring.

Biggest Recruiting Challenges Companies Face



The Talent Market

Langscape

With the U.S. adding more than 250,000 jobs in September 2024* and the unemployment rate dropping, the hiring market has been exceeding expectations. Yet, there is an intriguing contrast in the industry: recruiters don't have enough qualified candidates to fill open positions while at the same time there are an abundance of candidates for open positions.

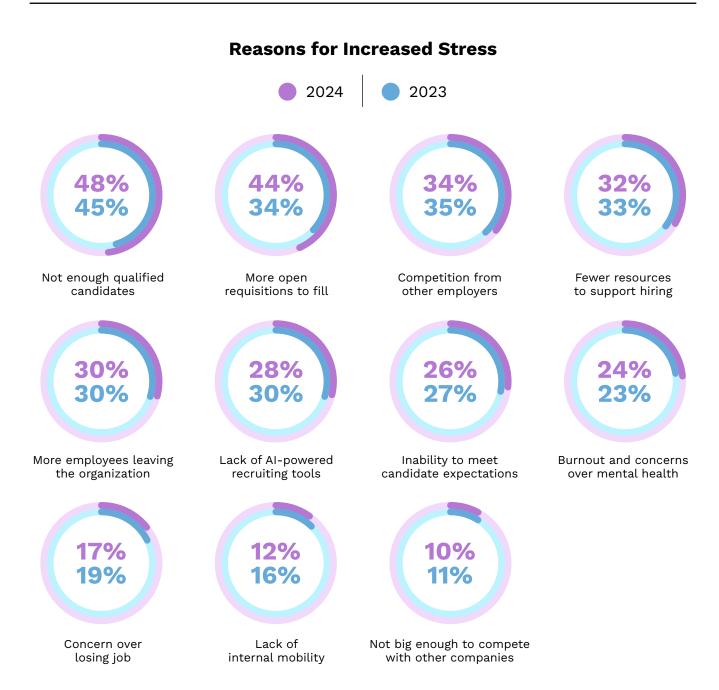
The fierce battle for top talent and qualified candidates makes finding the perfect candidate like trying to catch a unicorn.



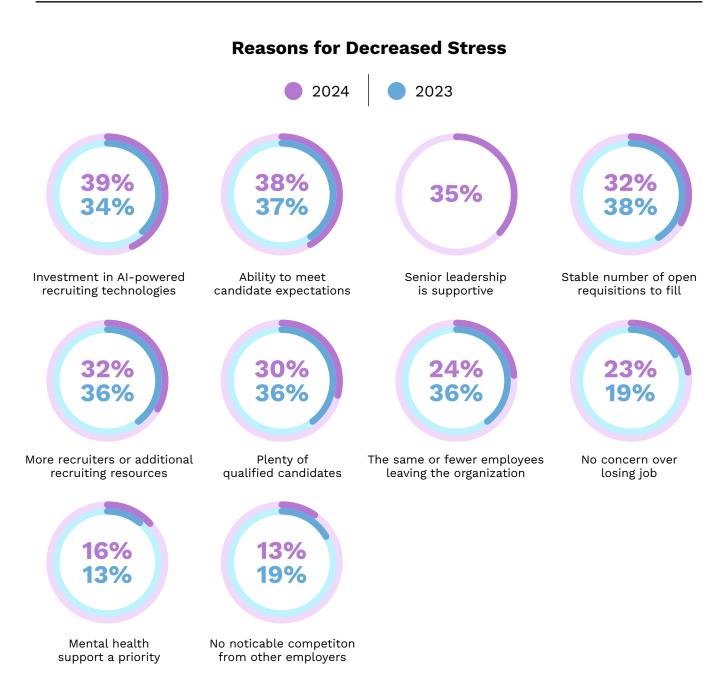
^{*}This information is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), October 2024.

Recruiter Team Stress Levels

Similar to last year, a little over half of recruiters find their job more stressful today (54%), which retains a drop of more than 10 percentage points from 2022 (65%). Although those attributing more open requisitions to fill (44%) as the reason for a higher level of stress jumped by 10 percentage points, the other reasons given remained consistent this year.



For those talent professionals who do not feel their recruiting job is more stressful than it was a year ago, over one-third believe it's because of investment in AI-powered recruiting technologies (39%), the ability to meet candidate expectations (38%), and senior leadership support being supportive (35%).



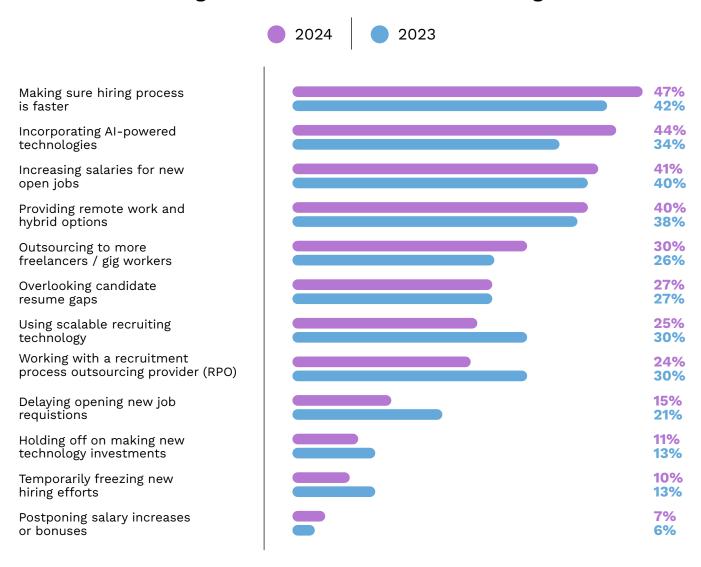


Business Flexibility

Efforts to make the hiring process more flexible and scalable have evolved in the last year. Making sure the hiring process is faster overall topped the list at 47% in 2024, compared to 42% in 2023, followed by incorporating AI-powered technologies, which made a 10% jump in 2024 at 44% compared to 34% in 2023, and increasing salaries for new open jobs (41% in 2024 versus 40% in 2023).

Talent Acquisition decision makers also indicated providing remote work and hybrid options (40%) and outsourcing to more freelancers and/or gig workers (30%) are areas where businesses have become more flexible in their hiring processes.

Business Changes to Become More Flexible in Hiring Processes



Analytics Technology

An overwhelming **84% of respondents are leveraging analytics** to better understand key areas impacting day-to-day work and inform their overall recruitment strategy. **Of this group, 87% are still relying on spreadsheets,** even when they are pulling reports as frequently as bi-weekly (40%) and weekly (31%).

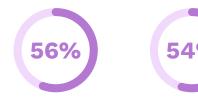
Over half of respondents are seeking to better understand the candidate experience (56%), hiring costs (54%), and time to hire (52%). And over 40% of respondents are gathering insights on sourcing (48%), employee referrals (47%), and workflow (43%).

This frequent manual process can significantly be augmented with the use of intuitive recruitment technology that makes it easy to pull, analyze, and use reports to inform actionable strategies to finding and keeping great talent.



Types of Reports Being Pulled

New for 2024



Candidate experience





Time to hire



Sourcing



Employee referrals



Workflow



Recruiter activity



Offer metrics

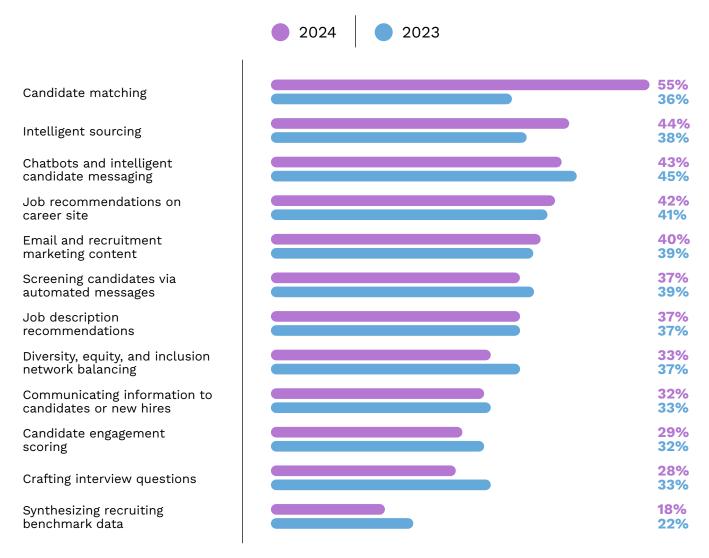


AI-Powered Recruiting Technology

The use of AI to augment current recruitment technology is quickly becoming a mainstream practice. We found **63% of recruiters and Talent Acquisition decision makers already use AI to augment their current recruitment technology,** which is up from 58% last year. **89% of this group are using AI frequently or very frequently—**an increase of 7% from last year's 82%.

When it comes to use cases for AI, over half of teams are leveraging AI for candidate matching (55%), which is a jump of almost 20% from 2023. Over 40% of teams are leveraging AI for multiple uses across the recruiting lifecycle, including intelligent sourcing (44%), chatbots and intelligent candidate messaging (43%), job recommendations on career sites (42%), and email and recruitment marketing content (40%).

Ways AI is Being Leveraged in Hiring Processes



It's clear that

Alis reshaping

how recruiters approach Talent Acquisition.

Of the Talent Acquisition decision makers who currently use AI to augment recruiting technology, nearly half (46%) leverage AI-powered recruiting tools with AI functionality built in, which is similar to last year. But using a combination of both AI-powered recruiting tools and free or low-cost Generative AI tools is more popular this year (29%) than using free or low-cost Generative AI tools to complement current recruiting tech stacks (25%).

It's clear that AI is reshaping how recruiters approach Talent Acquisition by enhancing recruiters' ability to source potential candidates more efficiently and allowing them to more accurately align candidates with job requirements. AI even increases efficiency and scale in candidate engagement, which is particularly crucial in a competitive hiring environment and can give companies a leg up against competitors.



"Gen AI is a gift and curse for recruiters! The reality is, especially in the U.S., we don't have enough talent to fill our open roles, and demographics are making the problem worse every day. At the same time, Gen AI tools for candidates are making it easy for them to apply for jobs. So, as recruiters, we have more candidates to work through, but we still don't have enough talent! The winners will be those recruiting teams that can leverage their own AI tools to attract, connect, and entice the best talent that is already employed."

Tim Sackett,

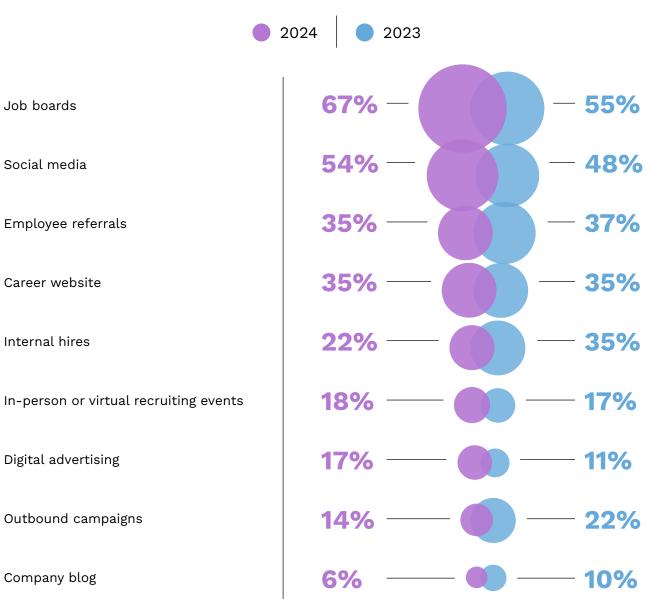
Talent Acquisition & HR Analyst, HRU Technical Resources



Most Valuable Sources of Hire

Job boards increased as the most effective channel in growing employer brands in 2024, with a 12% increase over 2023 taking it to 67%. Social media also saw a relevant increase of 6% (up to 54%). Employee referrals and career websites tied for third at 35%, while internal hires fell by 13% to 22%.

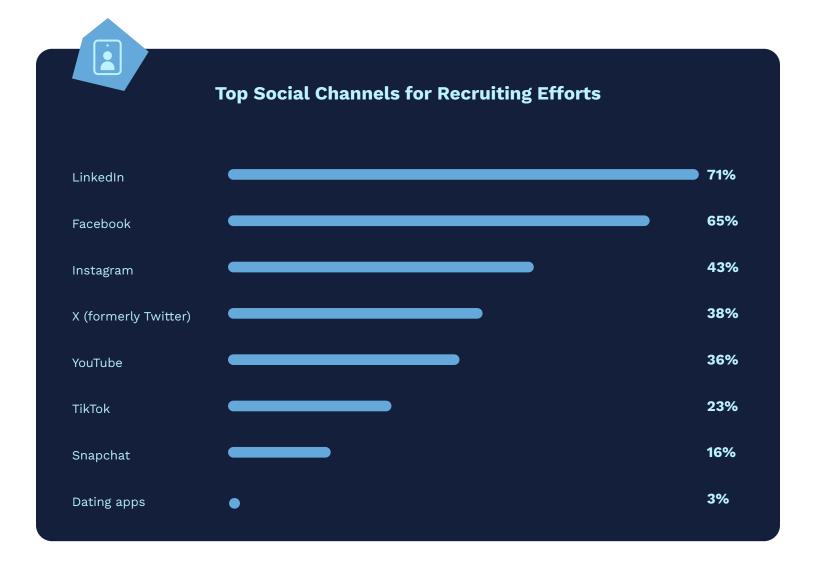
Most Effective Channels to Grow Employer Brand





LinkedIn is the top social channel being used for recruiting with 71% of respondents currently using or planning to use it. Facebook is a close second at 65%, followed by Instagram at 43%, X (formerly known as Twitter) at 38%, and YouTube at 36%.

The way Talent Acquisition teams embrace technology to gain insights and improve processes while spending more time focusing on building relationships with job seekers is a science that reaps benefits for businesses. We're eager to see how this new approach to reaching the right candidates evolves and enhances people-first recruiting.



Talent Acquisition and Recruiting Benchmarks

Referencing some of the most important industry benchmarks*

can help talent teams identify where opportunities exist to improve the hiring process while ensuring a people-first candidate experience. The benchmarks below like time to fill, application volume, and application to interview ratio showcase where businesses are making the hiring process faster overall—the most popular way that organizations are making the hiring process more flexible and scalable.

Here, you can also explore how your recruiting efforts compare to organizations of a similar size and sector.

Time to Fill

The average time it takes a company to fill a job opening, from the date a job requisition is posted until a candidate accepts an offer dropped by a full seven days over the past 12 months, from 48 days in 2023 to 41 days in 2024.

Average time to fill in days.



"As more and more teams looking to become high-performance are leaning into interview scheduling automation, it comes as no surprise that we're seeing a decrease in time to fill. Those hiring know that for the most in-demand candidates, getting interviews booked quickly and painlessly could mean the crucial difference of getting an offer secured and accepted before their competitors."

Mark Ridderhof,

Head of Sales & Partnerships, Cronofy

^{*}This section serves up a few notable benchmark metrics across the recruiting funnel for enterprises and small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) based on data of over 22,000 Employ customers. It also pulls in data across various industries.

Breaking this down by company size, SMBs decreased time to fill by three days from 49 in 2023 to 46 in 2024. Enterprise companies decreased time to fill by 11 days going from 46 in 2023 to 35 in 2024.

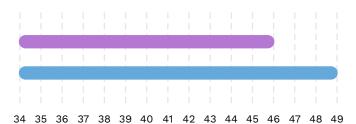
This corresponds to the details below showing enterprises are seeing fewer applications throughout a 12-month period. These same companies are also more likely to invest in technology to streamline their hiring process.

Average Time to Fill in Days by Company Size Over 12-Month Period

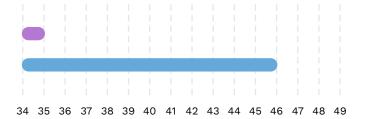
2024

2023

SMB



Enterprise

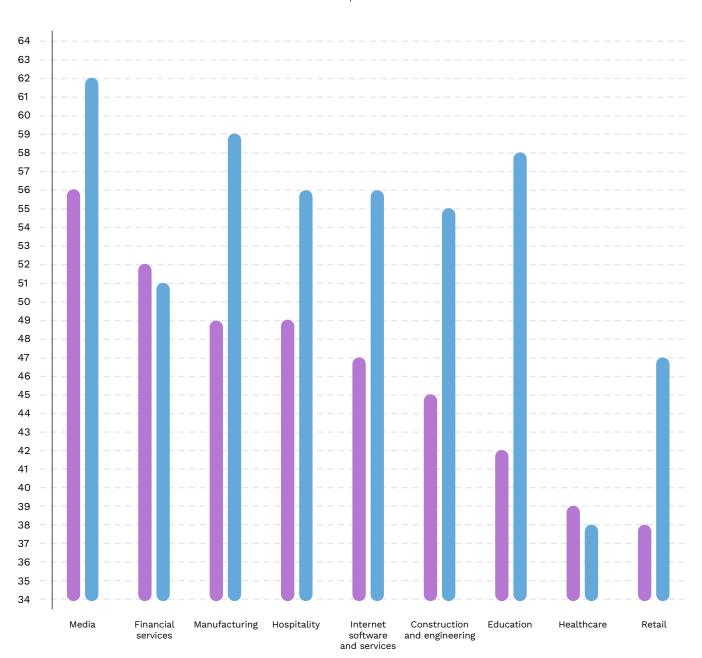




Almost all industries represented saw significant reductions in the time it takes to find and hire a new employee, most notably in education (27%), retail (20%), construction and engineering (18%), and internet software and services and manufacturing (both 17%). The few increases were minimal at less than 1%.

Average Time to Fill in Days for Select Industries During a 12-Month Period



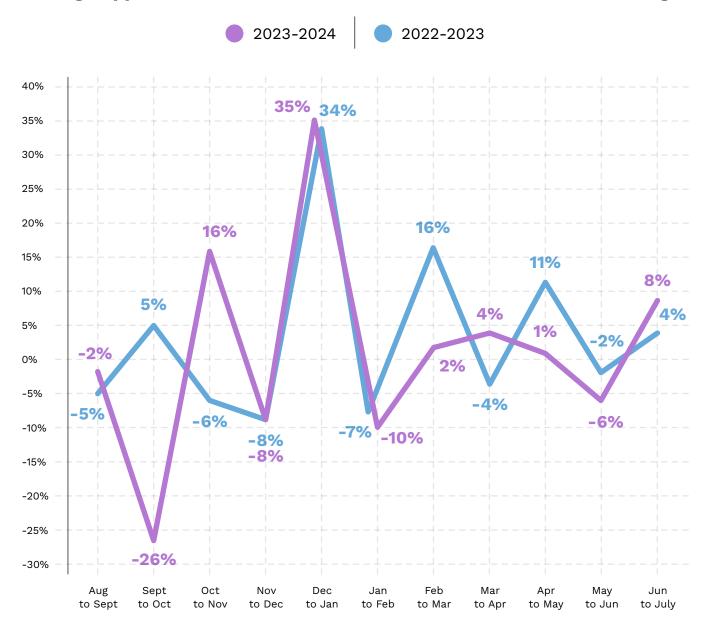


Applications and Interviews

During the last 12 months, the average number of applicants has climbed overall, with a typical dip in December and corresponding spike in January. The back half of 2023 saw more dramatic ups and downs while the first half of 2024 leveled off more.

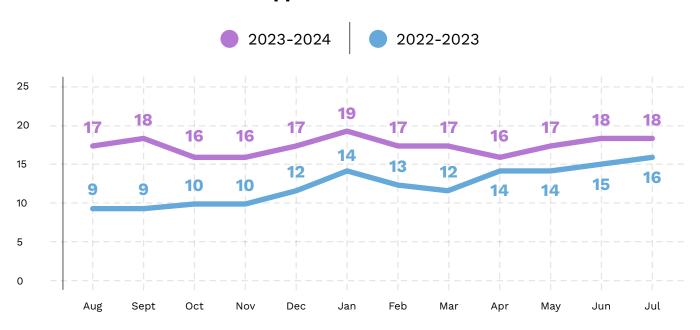
Applications for SMBs increased significantly while applications for enterprises slowed slightly.

Average Applications Submitted Over 12-Month Period (Percent Change)

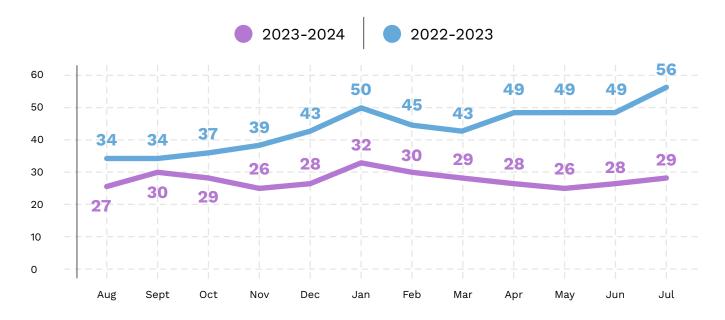


The total number of applications per interview increased for SMBs and decreased for enterprises.

Total Number of Applications Per Interview for SMBs

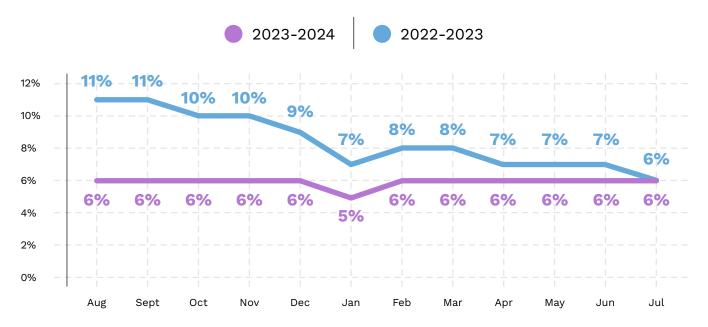


Total Number of Applications Per Interview for Enterprises

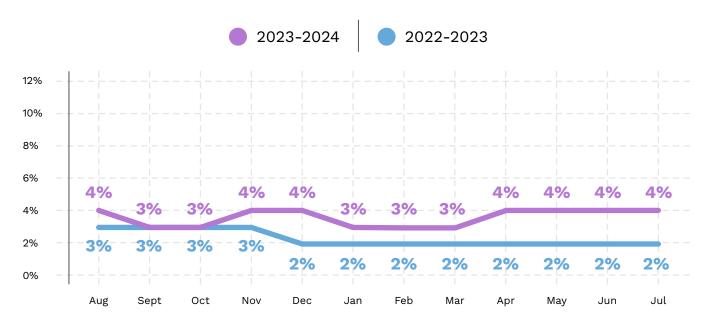


When looking at the conversion rate from application to scheduled interviews, SMBs saw a dramatic dip compared to the second half of 2023 but leveled out in the first half of 2024. And enterprise companies maintained a much lower applicant to interview ratio than SMBs.

Application to Interview Ratio for SMBs



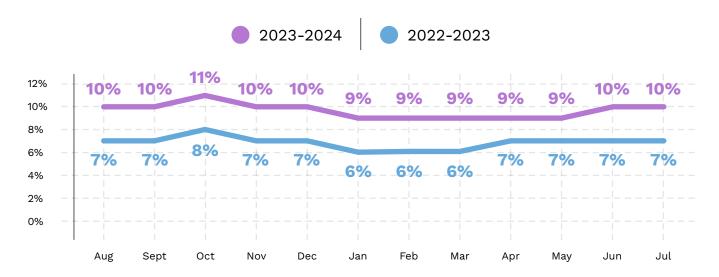
Application to Interview Ratio for Enterprises



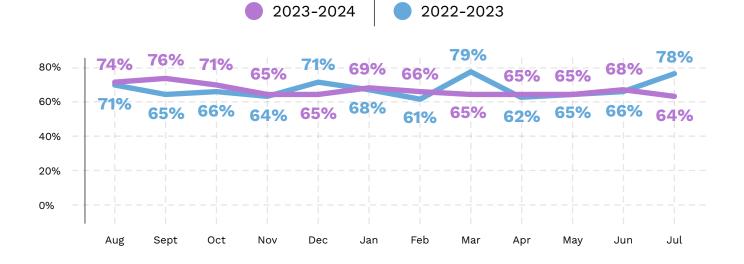
The interview to offer ratio—i.e., average number of candidates a hiring manager must interview to make an offer—remained relatively flat compared to 2023. Although SMBs still see a much lower interview to offer ratio, the higher volume of applications does not seem to impact this number. SMBs are seeing a higher number of qualified candidates reach the interview stage.

With considerable competition for open jobs and large numbers of applicants, it can be challenging for recruiters to manage the high volume of applications. In the case of SMB companies, they are receiving more qualified applicants and fewer applications overall for open requisitions.

Interview to Offer Ratio for SMBs



Interview to Offer Ratio for Enterprises



Outlook and Investments for 2025

At the time of this report's publication, the U.S. job market is holding steady with eight million job openings and a job opening rate of 4.8%.*

The majority of job opening increases have occurred in small businesses and in select industries including construction, local and state government, and education.

We found there is a very optimistic outlook on the future of recruiting with Talent Acquisition teams expecting to fill more requisitions in the coming year and feeling like hiring will be less challenging than in the recent past.

With that said, we've witnessed how important it is for companies to have flexible and scalable hiring processes and how businesses are making strides in those areas, including making sure the hiring process is faster overall and incorporating AI-powered technologies to help. The flexibility of providing remote and hybrid work options did rank fourth in importance when it comes to flexible hiring processes and is also a key factor to note. And while the outlook for hybrid roles remains steady, respondents expect a 100% in-office approach to bounce back and remote-only options to decline.

Since only 24 percent of respondents chose inability to meet candidate expectations as a reason hiring in 2025 will be more challenging, it remains to be seen how the ongoing work model discussions and importance of flexibility impact the ability to hire top talent.



^{*}This information is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), October 2024.

Recruiting Outlook

From an investment standpoint, things are more clear-cut. Budgets are expected to increase or stay the same.

Businesses will likely make those investments in technology-driven processes and AI where opportunities to make the most impact to save time, gain insights, and focus on people-first recruiting abound.

ر دو ی 72%

72% anticipate hiring somewhat more or significantly more in 2025.



92% of Talent Acquisition decision makers are optimistic about the future of recruiting (a 6% increase from last year), with 72% anticipating hiring somewhat more or significantly more in 2025.



"There is an optimistic buzz and a passion for ensuring a candidate-centric experience in the Talent Acquisition space. The argument of where and how people work will continue for a few more years to come, but regardless of how that plays out, Talent Acquisition teams that leverage metrics to illustrate how HR strategies contribute to overall business performance and adopt AI to help scale will be infinitely more successful."

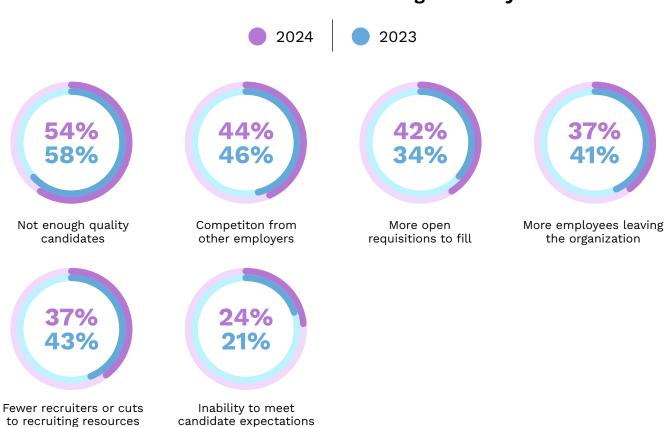
Stephanie Manzelli, CHRO, Employ

Hiring Challenges

Slightly over half of talent professionals (51%) believe that hiring new employees within the next 12 months will be very challenging or somewhat challenging—a decrease of six percent from last year and 10% from 2022.

Those that expect hiring to be more challenging state not having enough quality candidates (54%), competition from other employers (44%), and having more open requisitions to fill (42%) as the main reasons for an increase in difficulty.

Reasons for Increase in Hiring Difficulty



Twenty one percent of respondents believe that hiring will be somewhat less or not challenging in 2025 mainly because of their ability to meet candidate expectations (58%, a 23% jump from last year's 35%), having enough quality candidates (54%), and having more recruiters or additional recruiting resources (47%).

Reasons for Decrease in Hiring Difficulty





Ability to meet candidate expectations (e.g. salary requirements, benefits and perks)



Enough quality candidates



More recruiters or additional recruiting resources



The same or fewer employees leaving the organization



Less open requisitions to fill



Low competition from other employers



Work Policy Approach: Remote, Hybrid, or In Office

A growing number of organizations are expected to move to a 100% in-office model—34% in 2024 compared to 17% in 2023, bringing fully remote policies to 9% versus 27% last year.

A hybrid (in-office and remote approaches) retained the majority choice at 57%, up 1% from last year. Of this number, 47% have a pattern of three days in office, two days remote.

Work Policy Approach in 2025

2024





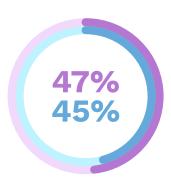






Hybrid Approach Pattern

2024 2023



3 days in office, 2 days remote



4 days in office, 1 day remote



2 days in office,3 days remote



Employee/manager discretion/as needed



1 day in office, 4 days remote



Recruiting Investments

Over the next six to 12 months, an overwhelming majority of Talent Acquisition professionals expect to either increase (64%) or keep their recruiting spend the same (28%).

Investing in new recruitment technology processes remained the top place talent teams plan to increase their recruiting spend with a 14% jump from 50% in 2023 to 64% in 2024.

A majority of other areas teams plan to increase spend hovered in the 40-44% range, including spending more on job advertising (44%), investing in additional team training and hiring new recruiting team requisitions (each 43%), expanding existing recruitment technology stack (41%), and investing in recruitment process outsourcing (40%).

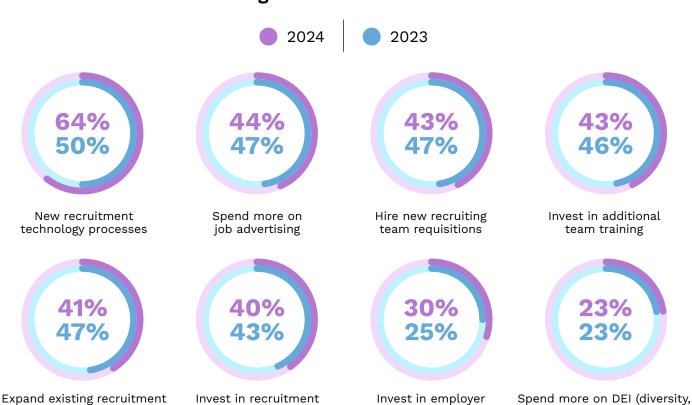


"In our research we're seeing more employers leaning into AI technologies, especially on the recruiting front. These tools can help to increase personalization, speed up hiring processes, and still make candidates feel like they are heard and valued. Imagine a Venn diagram with one circle being process-centric activities and the other circle being repetitive and routine actions. The overlap in the middle of those two circles is where AI usage in hiring began, but it's steadily expanding to encompass more of the predictable and process-oriented activities every quarter."

Ben Eubanks.

Chief Research Officer, Lighthouse Research & Advisory

Budget Increase Locations



process outsourcing (RPO)

equity, inclusion) programs

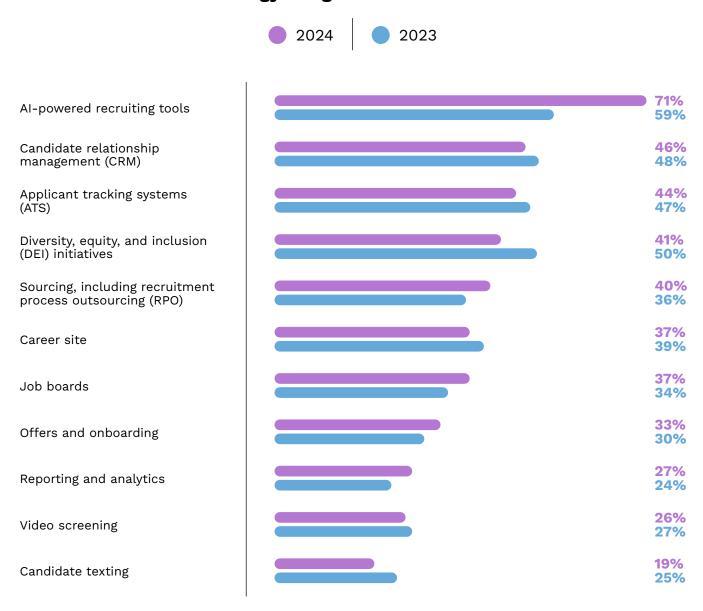
brand initiatives

technology stack



To further support the traction AI-powered recruiting tools are gaining, 71% plan to increase their budgets in that area, which is up 12% from 2023. The next ranking area, candidate relationship management, came in at 46%, followed by applicant tracking systems (44%), diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (41%), and sourcing (40%).

Technology Budget Increase Locations



A flexible way of working is sure to have a big impact on hiring, regardless of where things land. It is not just a major selling point, but it seems to be something that employees now expect.

Report Takeaways

Organizations have worked hard to address the ongoing changes and stresses thrust upon Talent Acquisition teams by a volatile hiring market. With recent investments in technology that incorporate AI and new opportunities to easily uncover data-driven insights, Talent Acquisition is now at the forefront of technological adoption that is reshaping how to discover, nurture, hire, and retain top talent while freeing up time for Talent Acquisition teams to focus on putting people first.

As we look to the future, it's clear that the recruitment industry is not just responding to change—it's actively shaping the future of work.

There are still challenges ahead, but organizations and professionals willing to embrace change, leverage technology thoughtfully, and place people at the center of their strategies will thrive.

Here are three key actions you can take now to stay ahead of the curve and empower people-first recruiting in 2025:



Action #1:

Use Technology to Increase Understanding Around Analytics

Extract important data out of spreadsheets and into intuitive technology that makes evidence-based decision making easier. Doing so will support a stronger foundation on which to find and keep the best talent.

With solutions that offer deep, actionable insights and reporting directly within your core recruiting solution, you already have the technology you need to help grow your business.



Action #2:

Enable AI to Enhance Your Recruitment Strategy, Not Create It

Automate repetitive tasks like initial candidate matching and screening so recruiters can focus on what they do best, engaging with candidates and building stronger relationships.

With AI built into your recruiting technology, candidates whose skills and experience match job requirements are more quickly identified and initial screening is more efficient, allowing you to connect with qualified candidates faster.



Action #3:

Enhance Employer Brand through Social Media

Collaborate with marketing to ensure social media channels are not only showcasing your company's values, mission, culture, and business practices but also driving candidates to open requisitions.

With social channels reaching candidates where they are living online and open to learning more about companies, you can increase visibility for your brand while leveraging another channel for recruiting purposes.

Getting technology right to support hiring processes can reduce recruiting time, decrease application processing time, improve candidate engagement, increase quality candidates, and speed up time to hire—all while giving Talent Acquisition teams more time in their day to build relationships and enhance employer brand.

When choosing recruiting technology, look for the ability to select the right solution for your current and evolving needs whether you are scaling up or down. A strong partner network is also important. Partnerships that integrate with other leading solutions will get your open jobs in front of as many candidates as possible, improve the candidate experience, and allow you visibility to make hiring decisions more efficiently.

The landscape of recruitment will continue to evolve, but with these strategies, you're well-equipped to turn these changes into your competitive advantage. Remember, the goal isn't just to keep up with change, but to anticipate and lead it. By taking these actions, you're not just preparing for the future of recruitment—you're actively shaping it. Your ability to blend technology with human insight, to balance efficiency with empathy, and to see opportunity in challenges will be key to thriving in this new era of talent acquisition.



Report Methodology

The foundation of the Employ Recruiter Nation Report 2024 is a survey of over 1,200 Talent Acquisition decision makers and recruiters in North America conducted by Zogby Analytics in September 2024. It also leverages proprietary recruiting data from 22,000+ Employ customers and nearly 600 million candidate records from its JazzHR, Lever, and Jobvite solutions over a 12-month period.

About Zogby Analytics

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