



A HIGHMATCH REPORT

# **TALENT ACQUISITION + HUMAN RESOURCES**

## **Challenges Report 2019**





# Table of Contents

▶ Introduction . . . . .	3
▶ Method . . . . .	3
▶ Summary of Our Findings . . . . .	4
▶ Common Challenges . . . . .	5
▶ Tools & Solutions . . . . .	7
▶ Goals & Aspirations . . . . .	9
▶ Conclusion . . . . .	10
▶ The HighMatch Assessment . . . . .	11

# Introduction

At HighMatch, we help HR and Talent Acquisition (TA) professionals find easier and better ways to hire talent who are productive, engaged, and tenured. To do this, we regularly speak with customers and conduct our own research to keep track of what challenges and goals HR/TA teams work to overcome and achieve.

**Our goal was to understand the challenges facing HR and TA leaders and how tools may or may not help them solve these challenges.**



## Method

In 2019, we interviewed current customers representing construction, consumer products/retail, technology, and government industries. In June, we surveyed 600 professionals and leaders in HR or TA roles (e.g., VP or Director of Recruiting, VP or Director of Talent Acquisition, VP or Director of HR).

**80%** of respondents work for companies with 100-1,000 employees and represent a wide range of industries; the most common were software/technology, financial services or banking, professional services, and hospitality.

In both the one-on-one interviews and the survey, we wanted to understand more about:

- ▶ **Common challenges** experienced in their HR/TA role
- ▶ **Useful tools or solutions** for meeting those challenges
- ▶ **Goals and aspirations for their teams** one to five years from now

# Summary of Our Findings

HR/TA leaders are focused on **improving quality, cost, and time per hire metrics**.

Our interviews discovered that while improving these metrics are important, they ultimately serve a deeper need to help free up resources and capacity for more strategic challenges, such as **planning workforce needs that drive business goals, identifying and preparing leaders, and aligning the entire organization around cultural values**.



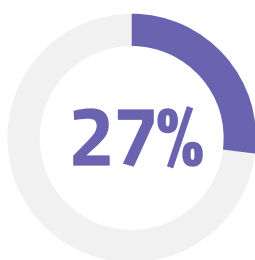
After reviewing both our qualitative and quantitative feedback, we assembled common themes related to the challenges facing TA and HR leaders tasked with recruiting.

### It is difficult to find prepared candidates for the "next" role.

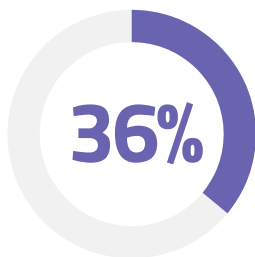
According to some TA/HR leaders we spoke to, viable external candidates for promotion or leadership positions have the necessary technical skills, but often lack the soft skills or cultural knowledge required to be seriously considered for leadership positions.

Others mentioned that leadership placements sourced internally might have the right skills and experiences but lack the background diversity that's needed to complement the leadership team and to fill a functional gap. One recruiter mentioned that *"hiring director and above roles is seldom done externally today. The lack of leadership roles filled by external candidates is a challenge because the leadership team's experience, knowledge, and abilities are all homegrown and homogenous. It's great to have that organizational knowledge, but then job candidates don't have the functional expertise that we need to be successful."*

The difficulty of finding qualified candidates was echoed in the survey feedback.



- ▶ Nearly **27%** of those surveyed agreed that they could not find enough candidates with the required skills to fill a position.

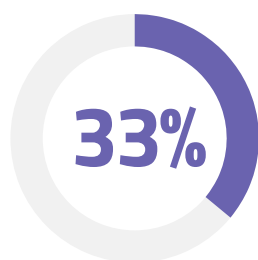


- ▶ **36%** of those surveyed agreed that there is a lack of consensus of what an ideal candidate looks like.

Without a consistent (or feasible) definition of a candidate's **ideal knowledge, skills, abilities, characteristics**, it can be challenging for a recruiter to find a viable candidate.

### There aren't enough resources and infrastructure in place to achieve strategic objectives.

A common challenge noted by several interviewees was their desire for the TA/HR team to be more strategic, but a lack of resources and systems makes it hard for them to look beyond the day-to-day. One leader noted that it is difficult to choose from a host of competing priorities and to make strategic decisions because there is a lack of data to inform their decisions.



▶ **33%** of survey respondents agreed that not having enough candidates in the recruiting pipeline was a regular frustration.



▶ **40%** said that the day-to-day task of sifting through applications to find top talent was a common challenge.

Although our survey did not ask about a desire to be more strategic, it's plausible that surveyed HR and TA leaders feel that their strategic bandwidth is restricted due to the repetitive tasks of sourcing and filtering job candidates.



# Tools & Solutions

We asked both interviewees and survey-takers to tell us more about the **tools or solutions** that would make their work lives easier.

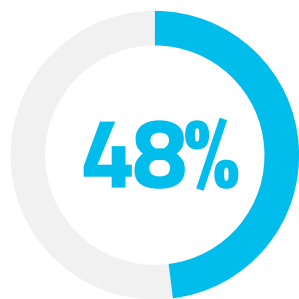
## More automation

Related to the common challenge that leaders lack the resources they need to achieve strategic objectives, many indicated that automating everyday tasks would allow for more strategic planning and conversations.

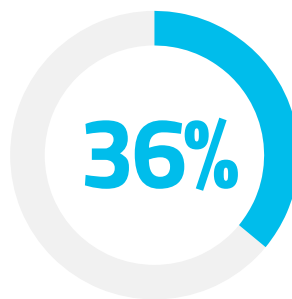
For example, if some of the high-volume or repetitive tasks were automated, leaders could source more qualified candidates, better identify the necessary skills for jobs, and devote time to track culture.



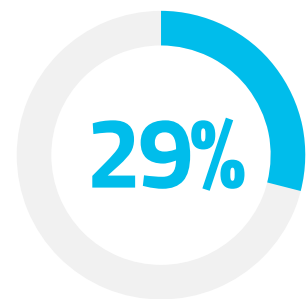
When we asked survey respondents which recruitment tools they were evaluating over the next 6 to 12 months, if any, the most common were:



**Pre-employment  
assessments**



**Interview  
scheduling tools**



**Social  
recruiting tools**

All of these tools help automate the time-intensive recruiting tasks of sourcing, screening, and scheduling candidates.

# Tools & Solutions

## Identifying culture fit

Many leaders expressed interest in a tool or process for better identifying strong culture fits among external candidates.

**One interviewee defined strong culture fit as people who *"personify the values that make our business special."***

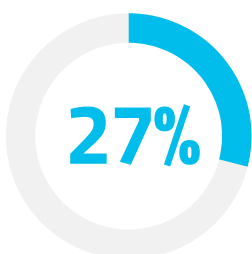
For some leaders, identifying culture fit was essential so they could better align employees with the stated cultural values and to other leaders so they could evolve their current culture.

For many of the leaders we spoke to, driving the company culture to be healthier and more productive was a shared goal.

## Close the feedback loop for the TA function

Interviewees indicated a need for systems to connect new hires to performance and success data. In other words, TA/HR leaders are hungry for solutions that can help close the feedback loop for talent acquisition.

Closing the feedback loop makes it more feasible to track success so that TA leaders can refine and evolve their processes. Closing the feedback loop also makes it easier for managers to track employee performance, and to create more personalized development plans.



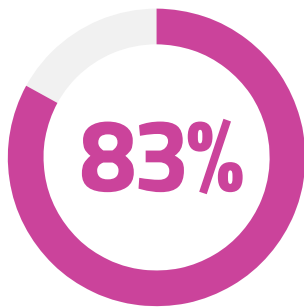
▶ **27%** noted they would evaluate an applicant tracking system (ATS) in the next 6 to 12 months.

# Goals & Aspirations

Finally, we were curious to learn what **key performance indicators (KPIs)** were the most important in 2020 and what aspirations leaders had in mind for the next few years.

## KPI's

At **32%** of those surveyed, **quality of hire** was the clear recruiting KPI winner.



- ▶ When asked to rate the **importance of the quality of hire metric** to their organization, **83% said it was "very important."**

Quality of hire was also flagged as an important metric by our interviewees. In addition to quality of hire, interviewees mentioned several other KPIs. The other KPIs, along with the corresponding survey results, are below.

### ▶ Overall spend for the recruiting function

- **15%** ranked cost per hire as the **"most important"** metric
- **66%** rated cost per hire as **"very important"** to their business

### ▶ Time to fill (*"We need to choose from 95k applications a year."*)

- **11%** ranked time to hire as the **"most important"** metric
- **50%** rated time to hire as **"very important"** to their business

### ▶ Turnover rates / overall headcount

- **11%** ranked retention as the **"most important"** metric
- **58%** rated retention as **"very important"** to their business

# Goals & Aspirations

We asked our interviewees about their goals for 2020 and beyond.

**Some wanted to prepare future leaders better.**

Better preparation took a couple of forms; some interviewees wish to build a better succession pipeline. Others strive to create customized employee feedback related to career goals and progress against a development plan. Another segment of interviewees mentioned their intention to support larger company goals, such as making the organization less siloed and helping the business achieve its next growth milestone.

Finally, some leaders noted a desire to improve and develop their hiring teams; they sensed the need and potential of their recruiters to get better at sourcing and screening to meet placement demands.

## Conclusion

The saying goes that "the more things change, the more they stay the same"--this is true for talent acquisition challenges.

Familiar hiring metrics, such as **quality of hire, retention rates, and time-to-hire** continue to be a focus for TA/HR leaders. While fulfilling day-to-day needs makes it hard to get *'out of the weeds,'* the TA and HR function continues to work to be more strategic in its purview and impact, and positive change is coming.

**Automation**, once seen as a threat, is now seen as an asset to help streamline tasks that take time away from more strategic initiatives. There is also a focus on connecting systems and people to create more aligned, data-driven decisions regarding cultural alignment and performance management.

Lastly, there is a desire for **better identification** and **crafting the company culture** so that candidates and employees can be selected or managed according to values.

# The HighMatch Assessment

HighMatch, formerly Berke, began in 2004 with the mission to create a better assessment that would accurately predict job performance.

HighMatch engagements begin with job benchmarking and the creation of **hiring profiles**, which outline the traits that are required to succeed in every job. After candidates take the assessment, you receive a **report** that provides clear, actionable guidelines to help you make great hiring decisions.

**We believe that hiring the right people transforms companies.**







## ABOUT HIGHMATCH:

Our Talent Insights Platform combines modular cognitive and behavioral assessments with a massive library of skills testing, and our managed services arm provides a range of outsourced services to resource-strapped HR teams.

SEE MORE AT:

[highmatch.com](https://highmatch.com)



2970 Peachtree Road NW  
Suite 300  
Atlanta, Ga 30305



1-888-220-7611



[highmatch.com](https://highmatch.com)