White Paper

# 5 Ways to Get Recruiting Results

HireGround Software Solutions

Since 1999, HireGround has established itself as a leading provider of Applicant Tracking Software (ATS). HireGround is recognized for its strong customer support, ease of use software, and ability to streamline software processes to meet client requirements.

2014 led companies into increased hiring due to both a lower unemployment rate and an ageing population approaching retirement. 2015 promises an even a hotter recruiting market. The recruiter's job is only going to get harder as they face changes in recruiting practices, technology innovations and shifting demographics.

So what are the key changes that are making the recruitment team's job even more challenging and what are technology providers doing to assist with these challenges?
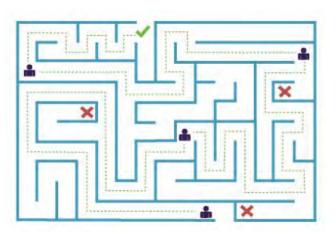
# 1  A GREAT APPLICANT EXPERIENCE

According to the 2014 Jibe Talent Acquisition Survey,[1] a surprising number of applicants loathe the process of applying for jobs. Just 35 percent of survey respondents indicate that the job search is "easy." Compare this to the 80 percent who said it was "time-consuming," or the 78 percent who called it "stressful," or the 71 percent who called it "discouraging."

What can be done to turn this stressful and discouraging experience into a positive one?

To begin, too many companies (40%) fail to **provide straightforward navigation** during the application process. The applicant should be able to get to the careers section easily from the main corporate website, and then in turn be able to quickly and easily find the open jobs that interest them.

How many of you in the recruitment team have actually counted the number of clicks required to get to your jobs and apply? We have. It ranges from as few as 2 clicks to as many as 6 – 10 if the method to s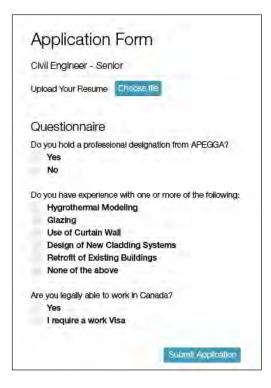earch job openings is complicated. In some cases, we were unable to find the careers page without a great deal of effort. As for candidates, they then need to create an account just to begin their application. She or he may have applied to several jobs using several different applicant tracking systems and processes by this time. Further complications at this point could very well mean just giving up.



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1        Jibe – September 2014 (https://www.jibe.com/blog/top-takeaways-from-the-2014-jibe-talent-acquisition-survey/)

Closely related to finding jobs easily is how much information is collected once the job seeker decides to submit their application. Any of us in the recruitment field have seen application processes that cause job seekers to simply quit part way through. Often this is due to the **one form information request** that is standard to many applicant tracking systems – collect everything that you potentially need from all applicants regardless of the requirement for the job. The problem is the application process simply asks for too much information that is not needed, causing the job seeker to get discouraged, lose interest, run out of time, or at best complete the application but submit with a bad feeling about the company.

New capabilities allow for a variety of intake of applicant information that is **definable by what human resources need to know** to make a sound decision regarding that applicant. Recruitment systems now offer the option to collect as little as answers to three or four meaningful questions or just the quick upload of a resume.



For the human resources review team this means that you only see the information that is required to make a decision on that candidate for that job. The collection of unnecessary information is time consuming for both the applicant and the HR review team. Simplifying the application experience means more applicants are likely to complete their application, with a better impression of the company. In turn, a shorter application means the review team can evaluate the requested information much more quickly.

50% of companies are not collecting what is needed from the job seeker but rather ask for a bevy information that is not related to the job requirements.[2]

Additional application improvements provide tools that **parse (extract)** data from the resume for the applicant, eliminating the need to copy/paste or re-write information. In the past, applicant tracking systems have been criticized for being flawed in collecting accurate information from applicants, but parsing technology has undergone significant improvements in recent years and many are shown to be accurate and reliable. With parsing, there's no need to request applicants to both upload their resume as well as enter their information in a form.
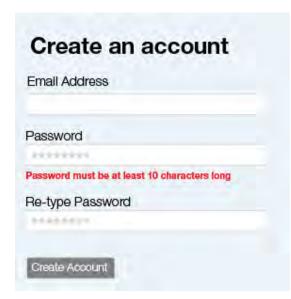
For the increasingly mobile job seeker, **mobile responsive pages** mean that the job seeker can search and apply from anywhere, anytime. Candidates seeking employment can find the job opening and apply using any smart device – phone, tablet, laptop or

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2        Forbes.com – January 2014 (http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeannemeister/2014/01/06/2014-the-year-social-hr-matters/2/)

desktop. This mobile capability is now an essential part of a great candidate experience and will soon become a necessary standard for every applicant tracking software.

In order to better streamline the application process, another system option is the **elimination of the need to create an account** when applying to job openings. We have all faced endless requests to create an online account whether for booking an airline ticket, purchasing a book, or reviewing our banking information. Remembering the multitude of user names and passwords for all of these applications is truly unrealistic. As many as 1 in 4 job seekers will simply not apply if it means creating yet another user account for your ATS system.

We ask, is this account creation necessary, or valued by applicants? In terms of privacy, all personal data is still safely tucked behind firewalls. Neither is there a great need for candidates to frequently log in or apply for multiple jobs at the same company. Job seekers should be able to quickly apply without the hurdle of account creation to overcome. Applications to the same job overwrite the first and they can be tracked by the unique email held by the applicant.

Lastly, the **electronic resume** will be more prevalent and accessible. Job seekers are able to save their resume in an electronic format that can be accessed from cloud storage or a talent network such as Indeed, LinkedIn or the like. No longer will applicants need to wait to apply from their home as their resume will be accessible from almost any device.

For companies revisiting their application process the best place to start is with is analytics: how long does it take to complete a job application, and how many visitors do not complete their application?

# 2 SOCIAL SOURCING and SEO

Social sourcing is distinctly different from SEO (Search Engine Optimization) but we have put them under the same discussion as it is your corporate online footprint that determines how easily you are found on the web. Certainly, having a strong social presence is tied directly to your placement in an online search. There are many tools available that can measure your social strength, or influence. Some names that you may have heard of are Klout, CARMA, Buffer, Bottlenose and Pinpuff – just a few among many tools, some free, that can assist with measuring your social impact (and the names alone are interesting).

ATS providers are fully aware of the need for corporate social strength and are implementing tools to better assist with gaining companies more exposure across social networks. One example is the ability for ATS providers to feed your jobs directly to corporate LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Google+ accounts. Some systems offer the ability for job seekers to use their LinkedIn profile to create an account.

In addition, there are a multitude of free job boards and aggregators and always more on the way. Popular options include Indeed, SimplyHired, WOW Jobs, Eluta, and Glassdoor, to name a few. Listings on popular job sites rank near the top of general online search results, and most boards hold the ability to talk to ATS systems. Jobs can be sent directly from an ATS to common job sites via xml feeds. This ensures the system stays in communication with the job, meaning if the job is edited, closed or expires then in turn this information is recognized on the external site.

Job aggregators using web crawlers can choose to scrape jobs from your careers pages (assuming you have them in an HTML format), however, the web crawler will not detect if the position comes down prior to its typical uptime duration. This can cause recruiters issues as jobs are still posted on job boards past their desired timeframe. When accuracy is critical, an ATS system can send jobs to job boards and alert of any changes to a job, including early de-posting or changes to the description.

Imagine the ease of dispersing your jobs to many job boards all at once, and with so much competition, not distributing your jobs means not being found online. Trying to post each job by hand or update your social media accounts manually becomes a huge waste of a good recruiter's time.

Google is accepted as one of the leaders in searching and delivering data to users around the world. Larry Engel, an SEO strategist for NAS Recruitment Innovation states that Google made more significant search algorithm changes in 2013 than

at any other time in its 15-year history.[3] Google is continually making changes to its algorithm in an effort to deliver the most relevant and useful webpages based on a query. The new search algorithms measure our changing behaviours, for example, the move to more mobile technologies or the potential for using voice activated searches.

Good providers of Applicant Tracking will keep their fingers on the pulse of search engine providers such as Google. ATS vendors will constantly be changing their tools so maximum search engine exposure is delivered. The good news is that simple mobile-friendly pages that offer relevant job information naturally rank higher in a search. Generally, the pages that are designed to provide a good user experience are the ones most successful in terms of SEO.

A classic example of a simple page is highlighted in the images above. The job listing page leads off the corporate careers page as chosen by the company. The job listing page is very simple with limited branding, meaning that they can be easily viewed using mobile tools such as a smart phone or tablet.



Some 3 in 4 job seekers are now applying using mobile devices. Those organizations that are not prepared to accept applicants using mobile interfaces are going to discourage an estimated 60%-75% of those applying.

You will also see on the careers page shown in our example that a portion of the job description is shown on the job listings page as well. This text is beneficial in terms of SEO, meaning google will pick up on keywords found in that text assisting job seekers in finding your company's job easier.

Companies challenged with getting their jobs in front of job seekers is partially answered by the development of a large online presence. Tools such as social networks and search optimization are embraced by both employers and software providers in the race to attract more candidates.

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3          Ere.net **– October 2014** (http://www.ere.net/2013/10/31/seo-in-2014-your-career-site-needs-to-be-a-swiss-army-knife-for-candidates/)

## 3 BETTER, FASTER, HIRE

Recruitment and hiring is undoubtedly a very expensive process, with HR experts calculating that the average hire costs about $3300.[4] Recruiting software can cut that number significantly by reducing the amount of time spent on hiring, improving communications, and providing search and referral systems that focus on the ideal candidate.

The goal of reducing the time to hire and subsequently the cost to hire is attained through software that is more powerful, but also easier to use. Complex systems take longer to learn, intimidate inexperienced users and are less efficient than software designed with user experience as a top priority. The first big step in making systems easier to use are **improved screening capabilities.**

Reviewing and analyzing large quantities of text data can be very time consuming, not to mention exhausting. The average job opening sees approximately 250 applicant resumes, along with a cover letter for each. If human resources can review 40 resumes in an hour (ambitious), this means scanning through applicant data six hours per day or 1625 hours per year. What is needed is a more efficient way to screen and review candidate data.
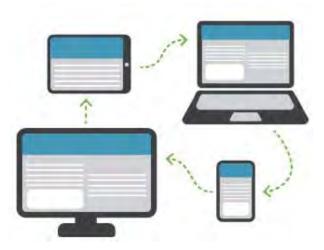
This can be done in several ways:

- **Custom questions in the application process.** Answers to questions can be weighted on the candidate's answer. Multiple answers may have differing values dependent on the weighting placed by human resources, for example, top priority skills or experience would be assigned a greater value than skills with less importance. Candidates can be scored, ranked or auto-rejected based on their answers.

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4        Forbes - May 2013 (http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2013/05/23/corporate-recruitment-transformed-new-breed-of-service-providers/)

- **Intelligent resume matching.** Uploaded resume data can be auto matched to the requirements described in the job posting. With semantic searching becoming increasingly powerful, software systems begin to look for the meaning and intention behind a set of keywords. Human resources will have less need to search a resume database – and the searches they perform will be smarter and more effective.

- **Automatic filtering**. Human resources can add system meaning when posting a job, which will screen a candidate for specific requirements. Those applicants without the correct criteria are automatically rejected or scored lower upon application.

- **Parsing resume data.** Screening capabilities will vastly improve with the continued development of accurate parsing software. Tools that extract structured data from resume text are getting better at placing that data into standardized fields. This results in the ability to tag resume data such as it makes meaning of the text leading to faster searching and analyzing.

The above points demonstrate a better computer analysis of data so that people evaluating this data spend less time doing so. Human resources will not have to complete time-consuming searches of existing applicants or review endless resumes to determine best fit. Software systems are getting smarter, and the advent of newer screening tools means greater speed and accuracy throughout the recruitment process.

Another way that hiring is being simplified is ease of access using **mobile responsive pages** for all hiring team members. This means that any user can review job lists and submitted applications anywhere anytime. This is particularly helpful for those managers working in the field. Modern systems allow easy access to job lists with permission settings that are pertinent for the company and team member. For example, the hiring manager may not need to see all new applicants but rather only those that have been sorted and moved to a pre-screen or interview stage. Viewing a job list with a well-designed mobile interface makes it easy for the manager to view submissions and make decisions with only a few clicks.

Let's not forget the ways ATS's are getting better at **assisting the HR team** with day to day tasks. Small tasks that are both time-consuming and tedious for humans can be completed faster and more precisely by a machine. Examples include the closing of jobs automatically once filled, application acknowledgement messages, and regret letters issued to candidates that were not hired. As described previously, jobs can be

fed to other advertising mediums such as free boards, social media, and paid boards meaning that no time is spent distributing jobs. Software excels at completing menial tasks, and any HR team can take advantage of this increased efficiency.

Lastly, we have noticed a trend where more companies are moving the responsibility of the final screening (for example, interviewing) onto the hiring manger. This lets the recruiter spend more time on sourcing and initial screening. **Systems are making it easier for hiring managers** to see resulting job lists along with sharing the applicant data that matters most to them (such as the applicants that have made it to the interview stage). Furthermore, collaboration among the hiring team can be facilitated within a system by assigning ownership to jobs. Notes and decisions are logged by the system and shared with the team, regardless of physical location. With improved user interface design and responsive (mobile) technology, hiring managers with little experience using recruiting software can easily take on more hiring responsibility.

In comparison, current processes for delivering information to managers outside human resources are time consuming. It could involve printing all resumes for any one position or mass emailing those applications to each of the reviewers. In turn, the review team must evaluate each applicant individually either via reading the paper information or clicking and opening the information attachments in an email. Generally, this means access via a desktop computer, as opening all these documents is impossible using a mobile device. This process takes recruiting outside the software system, leaving the ability to track decisions, comments and reporting behind. Keeping all recruiting steps contained in a single system is vital for team collaboration, accurate reporting and future database searches.

These system improvements all translate into better **speed of hire**. Over the last few years – with high unemployment and little competition for talent – recruiters could take their time and still land top candidates. As the pace of change in business and the competition for talent increases, firms will have no choice but to revisit "speed of hire" approaches and tools in order to land candidates that are in high demand.
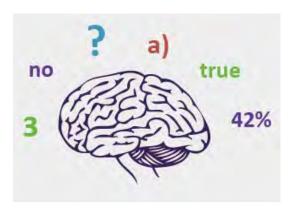
# 4 A BARRAGE OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Do you remember the extensive screening tests that were required prior being considered for any role, not so many years ago? These tests were time consuming and costly to administer, and therefore have gradually been abandoned. Moreover, these tests were often based on unproven psychological theories, and could potentially be interpreted as a discriminatory tool – something best avoided.

Today, other informal qualitative hiring practises have been adopted, but we predict a change here too. More formal tools are going to improve with new technologies that are being frequently released in our industry.

As mentioned earlier, many ATS systems are capable of comparing the resume to the job description and assigning a score to the applicant. Recruitment team members can choose whether or not to view the lower ranking applicants, instead of spending time looking over every resume. If specific requirements are not in the resume (typically keywords) the resume can be auto rejected.

The option to add questions that can be stop questions (the applicant answers correctly or they are rejected) or auto-scored questions gives the recruitment team much more power in quickly assessing the resumes flowing into the job list. Combine all options of auto matching, keywords and questions and you have some very powerful tools to assist in evaluating applicants.

Additionally, a system can reward certain behavior within the applicant database. For example, an applicant can be given special emphasis if they were previously interviewed for a job, or if they are a current employee.

Another option growing popular in the hiring software market is psychological tests, which are prevalent particularly in hourly worker roles that experience high turnover, for example, in the retail and call centre industries. These tests take one step towards limiting the absenteeism and theft that is typically higher in hourly, contract and seasonal employment. These tools combine personality testing, cognitive skill testing, along with multiple questions that determine how an employee would handle different scenarios they may encounter in their day to day work. Psychometrics (Edmonton based), or SHL personality tests are a two examples of these.

The collection of personality and skills assessment tools are validating and delivering real time feedback to the recruitment team. These tools can be integrated with an ATS such that it is easy for the applicant to respond to the assessment requirements and in turn assist the hiring team in making more educated decisions on any one hire.

All these assessment tools are designed to prevent a bad hire as much as possible. Hiring the wrong individual is an extraordinarily expensive mistake. The cost of a bad hire? "...twenty-seven percent of the U.S. employers surveyed said that just one of these bad hires cost their company more than $50,000." For smaller businesses of 60 employees or less it is estimated to be $8,000 in costs for each bad hire.[5] Ensuring the right candidates are hired is not a simple task, and assessment tools play a key role in determining good fit.

# BIG DATA MEETS HUMAN RESOURCES

Related to the discussion above, recruiting software is taking candidate assessments one step further. There is a vast increase in the range and depth of information routinely captured about how we behave, and the new kinds of analysis that this data enables. We are no longer limited to just basic testing – tools are being developed that can look at a combination of aptitude, skills, personal history, psychological stability, loyalty, and web habits, to name a few. With this wealth of information available, employers are capable of learning more about their candidates than ever before.

**Data-driven decisions** can be interpreted as completely heartless, and in many cases it feels as though the applicant is being stalked. However, focusing not just on data, but on the right data, means making better decisions. It is estimated that 4 out of 10 (39%) line managers rely on gut instinct as most important when making decisions. [6]The goal when hiring is to evaluate people based on how they can help your company perform better, which means eliminating some emotional considerations that don't reflect a candidate's suitability.

The book ***Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*** written by Michael Lewis and published in 2003, illustrates how the Oakland Athletics baseball team and its general manager Billy Beane used data to drive hiring decisions for their Oakland A's team. The central premise of Moneyball is that the informal evaluations, in this case, by managers, coaches and scouts, are subjective and flawed. Because of the team's smaller revenues, Oakland was forced to find players undervalued by the market, and their system for finding worth in undervalued players has proven itself thus far. This approach brought the Oakland A's to the playoffs in 2002 and 2003, saving the team from a sure demise.

So what are some tools to find those hidden gems? One example

5        Fast Company  – April 2014 (http://www.fastcompany.com/3028628/work-smart/infographic-how-much-a-bad-hire-will-actually-cost-you)
6        HR Magazine – February 2010 (http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/hro/news/1017470/managers-decisions-people-gut-instinct-objective)

are programs that assess the way potential hires use language on social networks, from LinkedIn to Twitter. From this the company can determine what certain phrases and words used in association with one another can distinguish traits pertaining to the role requirements, showing some candidates to be stronger than others.

By one estimate, more than 98 percent of the world's information is now stored digitally, and the volume of that data has quadrupled since 2007.[7] Ordinary people at work and at home generate much of this data, by sending e-mails, browsing the Internet, using social media, working on crowd-sourced projects, and more—and in doing so they have unwittingly helped launch a new way of evaluating their potential as a potential employee.

Companies are developing software that evaluates online activity in addition to other assessments. Some are going as far as tracking potential new hires using GPS—how far they travel from their current employer to their residence. The application of predictive analytics to people's careers—an emerging field sometimes called "people analytics"—is enormously challenging, not to mention ethically fraught and a little creepy. It looks at every aspect of the individual's life that can be captured via any means possible.

Most companies are just beginning to explore the possibilities opened by analyzing big data. But make no mistake: during the next five to 10 years, new models will be created, and new experiments run on a very large scale. Recruitment systems will be integrating these tools or building their own to better assist Human Resources in utilizing the information from big data or "**people analytics**" programs. With so much data at our fingertips, it will be exciting to see the ways companies will rely on analytical hiring without being overcome by an overload of information.

We do hope this information is useful and welcome any questions for feedback to be sent to info@HireGroundSoftware.com. All the best with your hiring for 2015.

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7        The Atlantic **–** December 2013 (http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/12/theyre-watching-you-at-work/354681/)