ClearCompany

Buyer's Guide:

Streamline Your Hiring
Process with the Right
Applicant Tracking System

Introduction

You've probably downloaded this guide for one of two reasons:

1. You understand the value an Applicant Tracking System brings recruiting processes and are ready to finally take the plunge in finding one for your organization.

2. You understand the value an Applicant Tracking System provides, but your current ATS leaves something to be desired.

In either case, finding the right ATS is a huge undertaking. From creating efficiencies in your recruitment marketing process to easily extending the right candidates an offer, the ATS not only can help in every step of the way, it *should.* Quality softwares pair best practices with automation to ease the hiring process and increase communication between talent acquisition teams. Meanwhile, applicants and candidates receive the positive candidate experience they deserve.

The pressure to find the right tool for your company is high. We know how important this is to you and your company, so we created this buyer's guide to help organize your unique recruiting needs, facilitate the research into potential solutions and ensure the decision you make is the right one for your talent acquisition team.

Getting Started:
Your Recruitment Strategy and Needs

Before we get deep into the nitty gritty, it's important you understand the gaps that the ATS will need to fill. It's crucial that you make your recruitment strategy the foundation of your search and decision. Some ATS might wow you with a shiny dashboard and long list of fancy features, but it may be too far ranging for your small talent acquisition team and needs. On the other hand, a small solution with lower costs could leave out some pivotal elements to your recruiting process.

Before looking for ATS options, consider the following factors in your recruiting strategy:

- Budget

- Average monthly and/or yearly hiring volume

- Internal communications needs

- Team size and individual responsibilities

- Sourcing/recruiting/hiring analytics

- Candidate assessments

- Approach to sourcing applicants

- Candidate experience (current or desired)

- Candidate referral process

- Current application process

Whether you're looking for a new solution or have never had an ATS before, these pieces of your recruiting strategy will inform what is standard to success in your organization and what isn't working in your process. From there, you can better determine what gaps the ATS will fill, how your team will need to be supported and what it will take to disqualify a solution as an ill-fit. As with anything, strategy comes first.

Before Moving to the Next Step!

List the above information about your own recruiting strategy and process in a document you can share with your colleagues. Including your colleagues in the discussion will ensure you don't miss a critical step, but will also open your eyes to some of the little, yet time consuming things they do that keeps your team running smoothly. Use the provided bullets as a kickstart, but pay special attention to the unique approach to hiring your company takes, and add in those elements as well. The point of an ATS is to help smooth wrinkles, not take the personalization out of your process.

Deliverables:

- ⊘ List of Current Recruiting Strategies (denote if they are working or need improvement)
- ⊘ Wishlist of Recruiting Strategy Improvements

"The point of an ATS is to help smooth wrinkles, not take the personalization out of your process.

Budget:
Planning the Investment

Right now you are seeing dollar signs, but money shouldn't be the only consideration.

Your budget includes...

• Time and bandwidth of your talent acquisition team

• Capabilities and technical savvy of your talent acquisition team

• Funding and financial capacity

While an ATS will take from the recruiting budget, it is important to remember all the other elements that affect the bottom line. Everything from the 10 minutes it takes your recruiters to schedule each screen to the hour-long interview with a candidate has an impact. In other words, time really is money. Don't overlook these, especially if you are in the midst of auditing and adjusting your hiring process. The right ATS will offer solutions to some of those draining administrative tasks, freeing up resources and returning on the dollar investment in less direct ways.

Before delving into the technologies available, take time to understand your hiring process as it stands now. If you already have an applicant tracking system, what benefits does it hold for you? Does your team need all of the same features or are things going unused? And, of course, what is missing? Is there a process that you know could be automated or better organized? If you do not currently have an ATS, identify the steps you take to make a hire, paying attention to the time it takes to perform each step. Even if it's basic, an outline for how you source, assess and hire candidates will help choose an ATS that actually improves, not hinders, your hiring team.

Before Moving to the Next Step!

Calculate what you can feasibly spend on recruiting software, paying special attention to what you're currently spending on other tools (ATS, scheduling solutions, interviewing platforms, consultancies, job advertisements, etc.) If possible, obtain or create an itemized budget. Some ATS will offer features that can eliminate the need for additional tools, which could save money. Also calculate time investments by asking individuals and departments to provide the average time it takes to do various steps in the recruiting process. Use your list of current recruiting strategies from the first step as a template. If possible, keep the salaries of those individuals performing the tasks in mind so that you can see the correlation it has on the overall recruiting budget.

Deliverables:

⊘ Itemized List of Current Recruitment Budget and Spending

⊘ Average Time Spent on Current Recruiting Processes/Steps

Check out this instant HR Software ROI Calculator to see your savings!

Internal Buy-in:
Making the Case

Your company may have an established budget for your recruitment team and the freedom to use that budget how you see necessary. If that's the case, you can skip this step and start getting into feature assessment. If, however, you need approval in order to make a purchasing decision, it will be pivotal you develop a case for the new ATS you seek.

With all the deliverables you created to this point, your team should have strong support for a change to take to your stakeholders. The cold, hard numbers speak to the procurement and financially-minded leaders who hold the key to approval. Discuss your challenges and the recruitment strategy that you hope to implement and how those changes will positively influence your department and business.

Focus on numbers that explain investments as they relate to:

- Time (*time-to-hire, administrative tasks, etc.*)
- Logistics (*quality-of-hire reporting, internal meetings, compliance, hiring volume, etc.*)
- Dollars (*current technology, recruitment salary, etc.*)

These elements are easily translated into numerical values and tell the story of your recruitment investments and what those investments can provide. If possible, multiply the hourly cost of the HR team member responsible for each individual time and logistics investment. This will give a clear value to each process and begin to unveil what the hiring and recruiting process *could* be with tech adoption or better optimization.

Buy-In Statistics Cheat Sheet

Take these statistics to your executive team!

- **94% of recruiters** and hiring professionals say their ATS or recruiting software has positively impacted their hiring process.

- **75% of recruiters** and hiring pros use a recruiting or applicant tracking system.

- Organizations that invest in a strong candidate experience improve their quality of **hires by 70%.**

Note:

There's a chance your organization's leaders need more specifics on how the change will impact their business. If that's the case, offer to provide a report on the solutions you research, including the implementation processes each will require so they can process the adjustments.

Research:
Understanding ATS Features

Features and functionality are what sets award-winning recruiting platforms apart from basic ATS. While neither option is wrong, in general, spending a bit more on an ATS will mean a more comprehensive solution. A more comprehensive solution means less time spent on passive candidate sourcing, branded career sites, automated job board posting/management, offer letter management and tools for hiring team collaboration. However, that doesn't mean small talent acquisition teams with lower hiring volumes need all the bells and whistles.

Use the deliverables from the previous steps to understand what you need most from your ATS and recruiting technology and what you think could grant your budget the best savings. Below are various characteristics and features that could be answers to your recruitment hopes and dreams. While not exhaustive, this list can steer your team closer to understanding what is necessity.

Dashboard

One singular place for all documents and communications that can be accessed by the appropriate teams. Most are cloud-based and capable of being accessed via mobile devices, from anywhere and at any time. In 2015, **68% of organizations** had at least one HR process in the cloud, but that number rose to **73% in 2017.**

Functionality for Different Roles

Hiring teams are diverse, consisting of recruiters who spend much of their day in HR softwares to Hiring Managers who only need easy access to specific information about their candidates. An ATS should match the needs and capabilities of your unique talent acquisition team, with options for those outside of HR.

Sourcing Solutions

Not only will some solutions allow you to track the source of a hire, but in some cases ATS can source candidates by helping to comb through social media profiles and connect with candidates who match your current openings.

Job Board Management

Most ATS streamline job ads by connecting with job boards, allowing your team to easily place ads, track applicants and manage postings.

"

Organizations that invest in a strong candidate experience improve their quality of hires by

70%.

Branded Career Site

Not all ATS offer career sites, but they can be tremendously helpful if your organization doesn't have the budget or ability to build and host one. In fact, 76% of applicants prefer to submit their CV through a company 'Work with us' section. Some technologies even offer completely customizable branding so that it blends perfectly into your corporate site.

Mobile Apply Accessibility

One study found 40% of candidates who try to apply using a mobile device, abandon the process if the ATS is not mobile friendly. Because today's job seeker is so mobile, recruiting solutions are beginning to offer responsive applications that can be completed via mobile devices.

Flexible Application Builder

Applications and requirements vary across industries, organizations and even roles. The ATS should have an application builder that provides the capabilities you need to gather necessary information from applicants, with the flexibility to work for any role you need to fill. Applications should not be one-size-fits all.
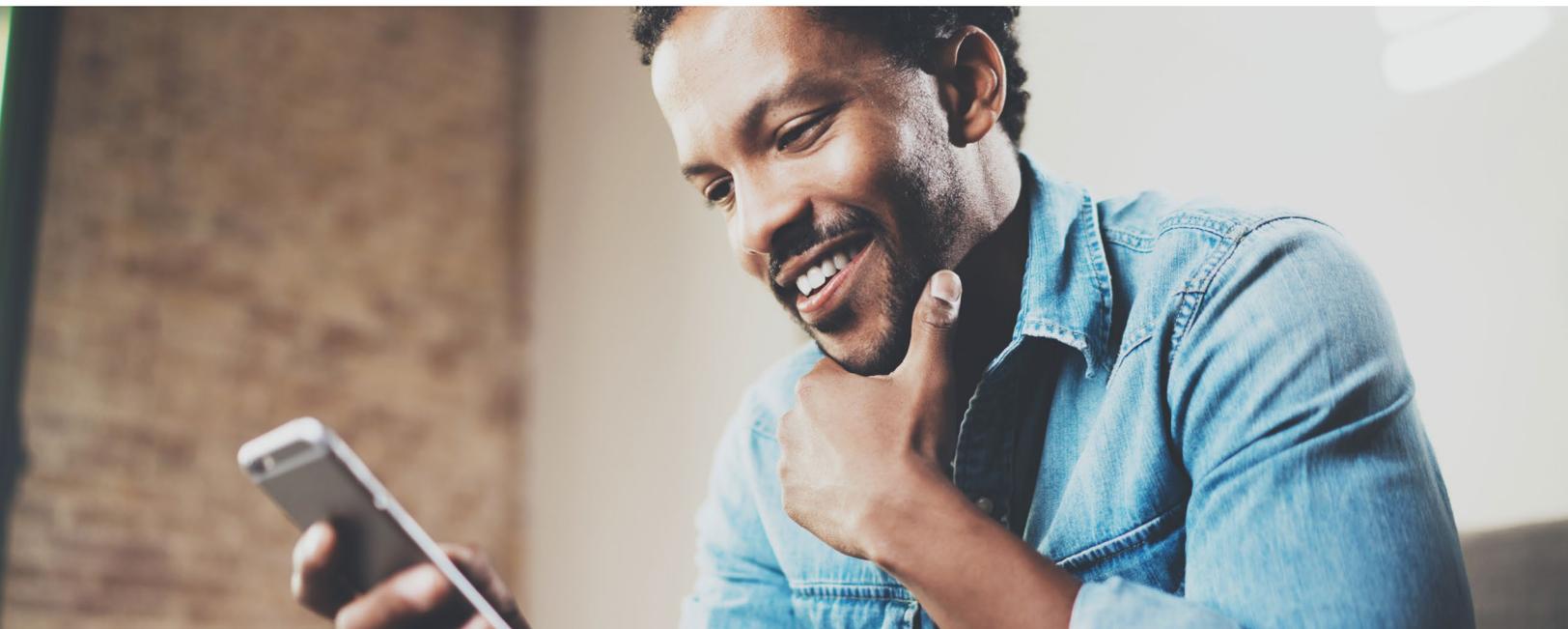
Multilingual Options

Consider how far reaching your talent is and what that means for your application and hiring process. If you are an international company, the ability to host candidate applications in multiple languages might drastically help your candidate intake process.

Video Interviewing

Some ATS provide the candidates with pre-recorded video interview or application questions. That way the talent acquisition team can "meet" an applicant prior to investing in future interviews or meetings. Again, if you happen to hire talent outside of your local community, a video interviewing option might be an important step in simplifying the hiring process.

Referral Management

Many companies are dependent on referrals from candidates or company networks. Some solutions allow users to easily share openings and track where referrals are coming from.

Interview Scheduling

Matching availability of a hiring team to a candidate can be overwhelming. Many ATS solutions allow the hiring team to establish available times within the system that is then provided to a candidate should they be progressed to the next step in the hiring process.

76% *of applicants prefer to submit their resume through a company 'Work with us' section.*

Scorecards & Internal Interview Guides

Consistency among assessments and interviews is pivotal to employer branding and making quality hires, so some ATS provide users the ability to set guidelines and customize scorecards for each role within the organization. The hiring team can then use those resources when assessing talent.

Internal Communication

From interview feedback to resume notes, an ATS can provide one organized place to collect and keep all internal collaboration. In many cases, permissions can be set so that you can limit the access of various individuals on the hiring team.

Tagging & Parameter Organization

Some ATS have the ability to tag applicants or organize their profiles according to set parameters, making it easier to select right fit candidates.

Candidate Management

An ATS should help the talent acquisition team understand where in the process a candidate is specifically. In many instances, you can automate updates to internal members and candidates so no one is out of the loop or left wondering.

Analytics & Predictive Performance

Data is quickly becoming one of the most useful, yet underutilized tools in recruiting. Advanced ATS collect relevant data and provide compelling reports that can and should influence hiring decisions and future strategies.

Background Checks

Running background checks and similar assessments can be complicated and time consuming. An ATS can help keep the process organized but also ensure compliance is met.

Security

ATS house sensitive information, both for your company and the candidate. Be sure your recruiting solution can speak to the security measures it deploys.
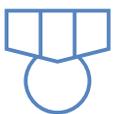
White Glove Service

In some cases, the best feature of an ATS is the actual team behind the technology. Some recruiting solutions providers take customer service to the next level by providing users personal account managers, expert advice and free recruiting and hiring resources.

Before Moving to the Next Step!

Mark the characteristics and features that seem like no-brainers for your team. Create a list of must-haves and nice-to-haves. Try to order it in order of importance for easier prioritization when evaluating solutions. Take note of other tools you have that overlap any of those services so that you can be sure you are investing in the right areas. The list above isn't exhaustive. Add any additional features or functionality you hope to see from an ATS.

Deliverables:

- List of Must-Have ATS Features (in order of importance)
- List of ATS Features You Wish to Have
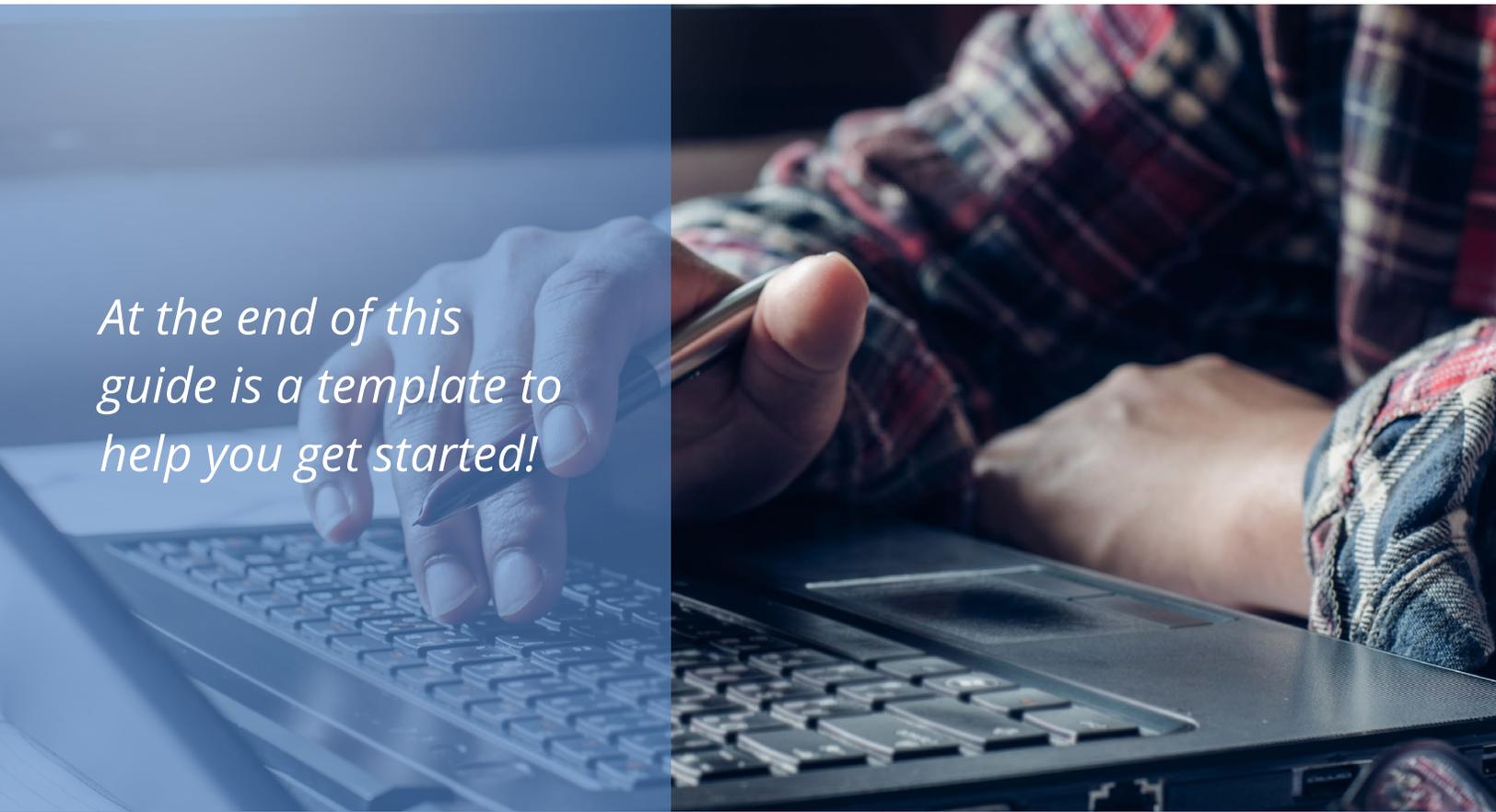
At the end of this guide is a template to help you get started!

Evaluation:
Selecting the Right ATS

Take your list of necessary and dream ATS features and begin assessing potential solutions. Look online, ask your extended network and allow your talent acquisition team to assess any relationships with current technologies. Be sure to read reviews or visit review sites like G2Crowd, Gartner, SoftwareAdvice and other online resources.

Gather a list of potential ATS and match your list of needs to their feature list or pricing page. Schedule demos to see the tool in action. A live demo (vs a video recording) will always give you a better sense of how the product will cater to your specific needs. Before taking your demo, create a checklist from the list of desired features and functionalities.

Download our **Complete Applicant Tracking System Buyer's Checklist** to ensure the demo and ATS assessment process is as productive as possible.

Rules for a Successful Demo:

1. Invite the final decision maker and at least one potential user to attend

2. Have your list of feature expectations handy

3. Take notes (preferably alongside your must-have list)

4. Give a clear idea of your company needs and challenges

5. Be honest about the concerns you have with the tool

7. Ask questions or to repeat a step if you missed it

8. Verify integrations with your other business-critical systems

9. Ask detailed questions about support options and implementation

10. Understand if there are any implementation fees

11. If you don't hear a necessary featured mentioned, ask about it rather than assuming it does not exist

12. Get a clear idea of the cost to your company

Above all, understand that this demo is yours to lead. The vendor knows the product, but you are the expert on your company's needs and expectations.

Before Moving to the Next Step!

Decide which ATS vendors meet your needs and expectations. Draw these conclusions by referring to your list of needs and the new information you gathered from research and the demo. If you've decided to reassess your desired feature list, be sure you can explain why the functionality is no longer necessary and how you plan to bridge the gap. This process will give checks and balances to make sure you aren't being swayed by a fancy dashboard or friendly salesperson. If no ATS seems right, revisit your strategy and budget. Be realistic and open when doing so.

Deliverables:

⊘ Narrow your list of possible applicant tracking systems to 2 options

⊘ Gather and organize your notes to be shared with the team and stakeholders

Decision:
Congratulations on Your New ATS

You have buy-in and a clear cut guide to what you can and can't expect from each solution. Report your findings back to your recruitment team and discuss the concerns and questions. Provide the information you promised your executive leadership team in addition to the notes collected from the demo and hiring team meeting. Be receptive to leadership's input on the assessment and overall decision.

With your shiny, new ATS, be prepared to welcome amazingly skilled talent!

ClearCompany's **Applicant Tracking System** is more than a tool. It's a resource. We've used our expertise to perfect our ATS into an **award-winning HR technology.** Our talent management platform provides solutions to every hiring challenge organizations face in sourcing, recruiting, hiring and managing talent.

If you would like to make ClearCompany part of your considerations, **schedule a one-on-one demo!**