



The people plan

How a people-first approach
to talent acquisition prepares
you for anything

Introduction

There are increasingly encouraging signs in the global fight against Covid-19. But the future course of the pandemic remains hard to predict.

This poses critical questions for talent acquisition professionals. Success has always been about getting the right balance between people, process and technology. But how do you decide on the best configuration for your talent acquisition “machine” when the situation on the ground is changing so rapidly?

How do you plan effectively when you have no idea what you’re planning for?

Results of a recent talent acquisition survey show that organizations are struggling for answers.



Out of 620 talent acquisition professionals we spoke to, 7 out of 10 are planning for short-term hiring only and around 30% lack a post-pandemic plan. What's more, 3 out of 4 rate their own talent strategies as basic, meaning they make only limited use of data and technology, and are not fully integrated with business goals.

We believe the level of unpredictability today calls for a shift in talent acquisition mindset. Forget people, process and technology.

From now on, it's people first.
Then process and technology.

Why? Because when you view your talent acquisition challenges through a people lens, your processes and technology become part of the solution. A people-centric mindset drives better decision-making and makes it easier for you to steer your organization through uncertainty.

It also helps you rise up the talent maturity scale with an approach to talent acquisition that is more strategic, innovative and agile—three qualities that are key to success in a constantly changing world.

Below, we look at each of these qualities in more detail to explore what a truly people-centric approach to talent acquisition might look like.

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Strategic talent acquisition: Get closer to the business

To plan effectively in times of constant change you need to:

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with the wider organization.

To plan effectively in times of constant change, you have to do much more than simply react to unfolding events. You need to connect with the wider organization, understand business goals and talent objectives, and anticipate future needs. This is what it means to be a strategic talent acquisition function.

For organizations embarking on digital transformation, it's about understanding the objectives, plans and timelines, and connecting TA's work to the transformation vision and goals. If you are really strategic, you can even inform and advise the business about talent availability and provide insights into what skills companies who excel at digital have within their enterprises.

Once you understand the business and talent objectives, the next step is to reconfigure people, processes and technology accordingly, taking into consideration the types of talent needed to meet those objectives and the availability of skills in the market. You then need to provide timely, relevant and meaningful dashboards on progression towards the goal.

Understand

business goals and talent objectives.

Anticipate

future needs.

We see this kind of strategic approach most often in TA functions that are far advanced on our "talent maturity" scale. These are organizations that have rejected the notion that TA should be transactional order takers, simply following the instructions of hiring managers about where to find talent. Instead, they operate as strategic business partners, providing hiring managers with insights about the talent market and collaborating with them tactically to find the right talent at the right time.

One area where "mature" TA functions truly excel is in workforce planning.

By getting closer to the business, and understanding business needs, they are able to think far more strategically about future hiring requirements. Technology also helps. With a state-of-the-art workforce planning tool, you can use predictive analytics to anticipate supply and demand, significantly reducing forecast error rates.



Innovative talent acquisition: Continuously create better experiences for all users



Your starting point should always be people.

Has every stage of the candidate journey really been designed with the candidate in mind?

Where could you make talent acquisition processes simpler for users?

Where could you make the processes faster, fairer, more engaging, more intuitive?

Innovation is not just about what you do as a talent acquisition professional. It's also about how you work, think and behave. It's a mindset that never accepts the current way as the best way, and that is constantly looking for opportunities to improve.

Until recently, innovations within talent acquisition focused on improving efficiency. But organizations are increasingly focused on elevating the experience for candidates, hiring managers and the talent acquisition team itself.

While technology is often a key enabler of innovation, your starting point should always be people. Has every stage of the candidate journey really been designed with the candidate in mind? Where could you make talent acquisition processes simpler for users? Where could you make them faster, fairer, more engaging, more intuitive?

On the next page are some examples of people-centric innovation that we are currently helping our clients to implement.



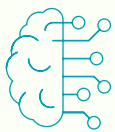


Moving to “always-on” recruiting

You might assume virtual hiring solutions make the candidate experience less personal. In our experience, the opposite is true.

Chatbots, for example, can answer questions 24/7—something no human recruiter could ever do.

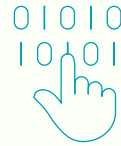
And with machines working round the clock sourcing and selecting, organizations can reduce time to interview by up to 79%, improving the candidate experience even further.



Removing unconscious bias

Objectivity makes assessment better for everyone involved, whether it's candidates who are given a fairer chance of being selected or hiring managers who are more likely to secure the best talent for the role. A people-centric assessment process is therefore impartial and objective. But, paradoxically, this requires you to remove unconscious bias (a very human element) from the equation. And this can only be achieved with the help of machines.

Technology enables recruiters to strip demographics away from the process and arrive at more objective hiring decisions in line with strategic DE&I goals.



Freeing team members up from low-value tasks

Robotic process automation and machine learning can free your people up to focus on the things that robots can't do, whether it's building relationships, understanding business drivers or bringing talent market insights to hiring managers. We saw above how chatbots can handle basic candidate interactions. Other repetitive jobs automation can spare your team from include:

- | Identifying suitable talent through social search platforms.
- | Stack-ranking candidates according to relevant skills.
- | Booking video or telephone interviews.
- | Keeping potential talent warm and identifying those that are “hire ready”.



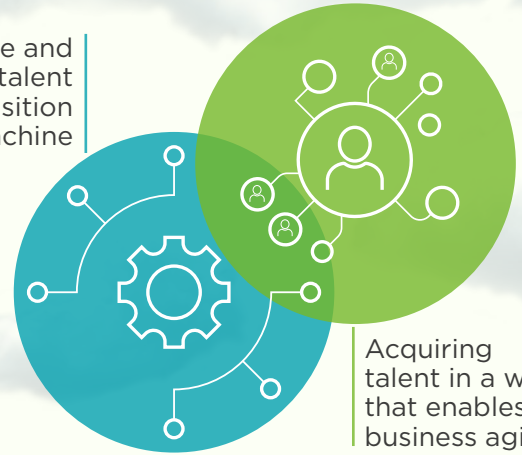
Empowering people through technology

QR code and SMS-based solutions give more power to candidates, by enabling them to apply for vacancies quickly and easily through their mobile devices.

Bots can also be used to reach out to candidates about specific vacancies and start taking them through the screening process. These are just two examples of how technology can be used to create a more people-centric recruitment process that is built around candidates' needs.

Agility in talent acquisition means:

An agile and responsive talent acquisition machine



Acquiring talent in a way that enables business agility

Agile talent acquisition: Scale faster by thinking skills, not roles

Agility in talent acquisition can refer to two different things. First, having an agile and responsive talent acquisition machine. Second, acquiring talent in a way that enables the business to be more agile. The two are very closely related. In fact, the more agile you make your talent acquisition machine, the better equipped you are to increase the agility of the business.

The right technology can help you become more agile in your approach. Virtual solutions allow you to scale up and down at the speed you need. This is a critical capability in uncertain times.

In our survey, the number one concern among companies who had laid people off was that they would not be able to hire back quick enough.

You can also use technology to compare your people's skills to your peers or to other companies you aspire to be more like. Combined with the right talent acquisition machine, this enables you to make highly informed decisions about whether to build

or buy the talent you need. It also helps you identify the best possible locations for new offices, production plants and innovation hubs.

Success Profiles are another tool that can be used to increase agility. Organizations are under increasing pressure to upskill and reskill in response to business change. Digital transformation requires large-scale retraining to make workforces flexible and customer-centric. Skills such as adaptability, empathy, and collaboration are increasingly sought-after. By providing an objective benchmark of what's required for optimal performance, Success Profiles help you predict what skills you need to deliver business strategy, identify gaps within your workforce, and create a plan to secure the right talent, whether through upskilling, reskilling or external sourcing.



Conclusion

To become more strategic, innovative and agile, you need to build a more people-centric talent acquisition machine. When you put people first, backed by the right technology and processes, you make more informed business decisions, you create better experiences for candidates and recruiters, and you can plan more effectively for the future.

Technology has a key role to play. Digitally enabled talent acquisition functions can offer a more high-touch experience, ensuring candidates get information, help and support whenever they need it. Team members are also freed up to concentrate on the more strategic elements of their role. And by building stronger connections and getting a better understanding of the objectives and challenges ahead, they can provide the business with informed guidance and advice.

The other benefit of technology is that it allows you to do more for less—a real advantage in these uncertain times when organizations may need to scale up or down at the drop of a hat while keeping an eye firmly on the budget.

Where a people-centric approach is of most value, however, is in helping you secure the talent your business needs. Candidates for niche roles are not getting any easier to find. Quite the opposite. Organizations that look beyond role titles, and think more broadly about people and skills, will be much better positioned to attract and retain in-demand talent, whether that means sourcing candidates externally or unleashing the potential of existing employees.



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About Korn Ferry

We work with organizations around the world to help them reach the next level of talent maturity. Our scalable solutions are led by experts, built on science, and powered by best-in-class technology, with an emphasis on candidate experience at every step.

Contact us today to learn more about how we can deliver the right talent acquisition solutions for your business, with the optimum mix of people, processes and technology.

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