

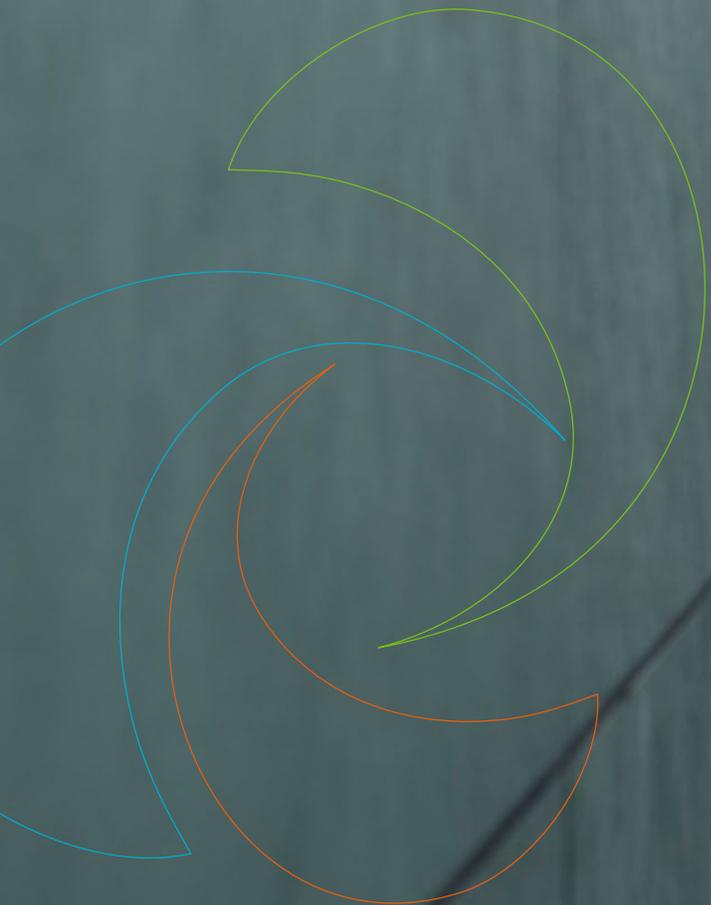
Technologies enable. People employ.

Effective talent acquisition still requires the personal touch



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Executive Summary

In the search for talent, it's not hard to find good people with fantastic resumés and impressive skill sets. But are they the right people for your organization?

Increasingly, the challenge in talent acquisition is not just to keep the talent pipeline stocked with good people. The real trick is finding talented individuals who also mesh with an organization's culture, goals, vision and values. And to do it in an efficient and sustainable fashion.

This is, of course, much easier said than done. Talent acquisition today is fraught with many competing options, methodologies and perspectives, all of which claim to be able to find the best candidates with the best fit. For hiring managers searching for a viable keystone to connect the best talent with the right organization, it can be a maddening experience.

To bring some clarity to the talent acquisition debate, Lee Hecht Harrison surveyed 277 human resource managers responsible for sourcing or hiring talent. The respondents came from organizations of all sizes and major industries across North America, Latin America and Asia-Pacific.

In this article we examine key sourcing and hiring trends and we take a long look at the tug-of-war between talent acquisition solutions based heavily on technology, and more traditional solutions that rely heavily on personal interactions. And how hiring managers are navigating this brave new world of talent acquisition.

It's not hard to see why hiring managers are struggling to balance technology with personal interactions: today's talent marketplace is awash in a dizzying array of online sourcing tools that promise to do everything traditional solutions have done, at less cost. However, when we dig deeper into the issue of fit, we can see that hiring managers believe strongly that assessing, engaging and leveraging talent still requires a more personal touch.

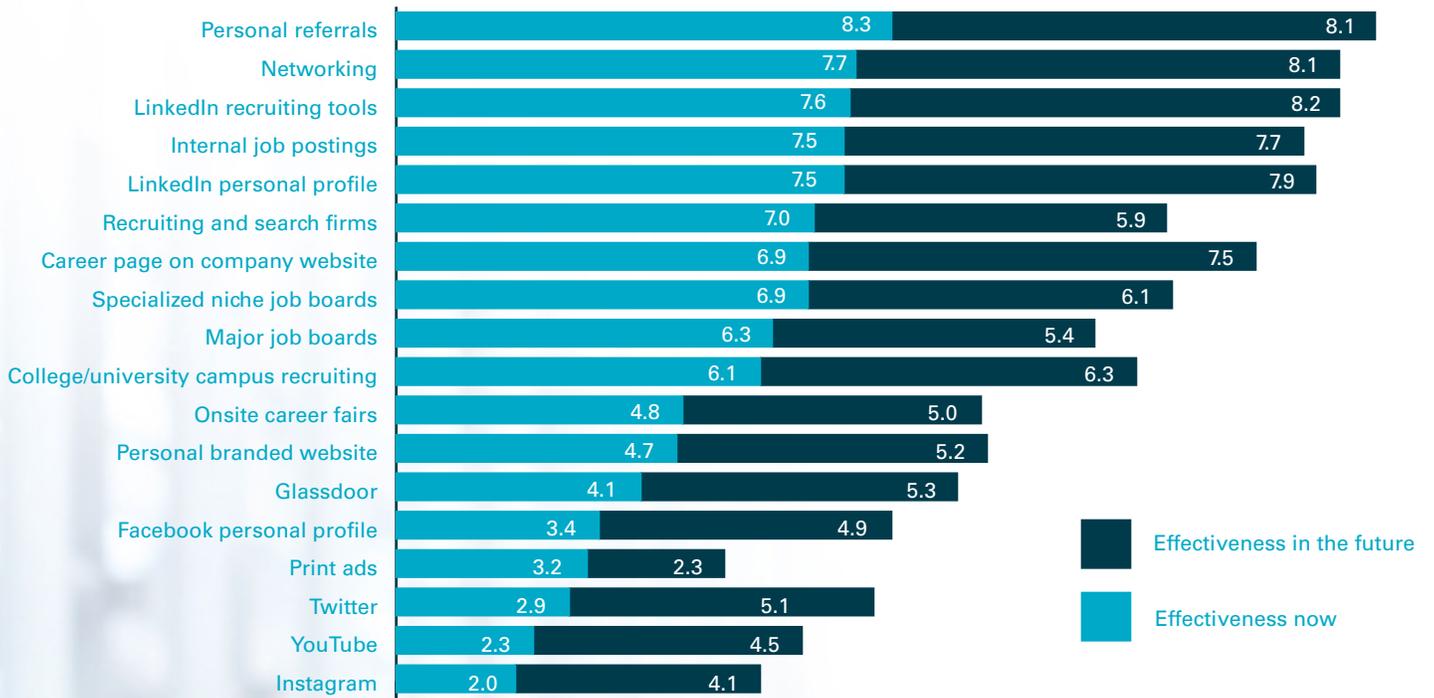
To explore the results further, we have broken the questions and analysis down along a number of thematic lines that should help forward-thinking organizations effectively transform their existing talent acquisition practices.

Social Sourcing

How do hiring managers source talent? Networking has always been a critical component in the talent acquisition challenge. Our survey demonstrated clearly that over the next three years, social networking, both professional and personal, will continue to be the most popular method for hiring managers to source candidates. At the same time, respondents told us they will rely less on more traditional sourcing methods, such as job boards, search firms and print ads.



We asked respondents how effective each of the following methods were for sourcing candidates, based on their experience.



Ratings based on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents "Not at all effective" and 10 represents "Very effective."



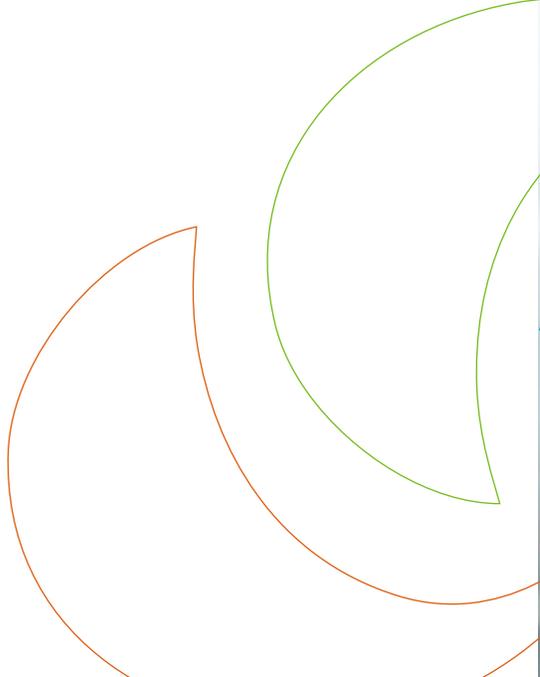
Technology will increasingly be an important tool to foster social sourcing. Consider that 98.2% of our survey respondents said that LinkedIn, already a tool of choice among hiring managers, will become even more prevalent over the next three years. This perspective is bolstered by industry observers that believe the pending acquisition of LinkedIn by Microsoft Corp. will provide the world's premiere business-oriented social media site with even greater reach.

However, the rise of social media as a tool of talent management is hardly limited to LinkedIn. Hiring managers are finding some utility in just about every major social media channel.

We asked hiring managers exactly how they were using social networks to source candidates.

Sourcing objective	LinkedIn	Facebook	Twitter	Glassdoor
Building a talent pipeline	32.0%	15.6%	20.6%	21.4%
Utilizing recruiting tools	37.5%	14.1%	5.9%	16.7%
Facilitating conversations	40.8%	25.0%	32.4%	19.0%
Seeking referrals or recommendations	54.8%	34.4%	20.6%	21.4%
Evaluating candidates	58.1%	17.2%	11.8%	16.7%
Advertising open positions	58.5%	50.0%	55.9%	61.9%
Searching for talent using key terms or hashtags	64.0%	14.1%	14.7%	19.0%
Posting jobs	70.2%	53.1%	61.8%	69.0%

LinkedIn was clearly the most popular sourcing tool, with Glassdoor second in most categories. But LinkedIn is not seen by hiring managers as a panacea. Today's hiring managers are showing interest in, and spending time on, almost all major social media sites.



Social sourcing vs. social media recruiting

Social sourcing and social recruiting are different things. Social sourcing often goes hand-in-hand with personal hiring networks within some companies. Basically, an in-house referral program promotes internal talent acquisition ambassadors—often with incentives provided—to source appropriate talent via personal and social networks. This does not require the training applied by traditional, trained recruiters, and some companies believe those personal referrals lead to the best hires.





Technology vs. Personal Touch

While social sourcing of talent is certainly important, recruiting and assessing that talent is a separate and exceedingly distinct challenge.

For example, many hiring managers acknowledged that LinkedIn's value comes from being able to connect hiring managers with millions of motivated candidates, all easily accessible via the right keywords. As such, it's a great tool to help identify a pool of talent with the right skill sets and experience. But in today's talent acquisition world, that only gets you so far.

Personal contact — referrals, networking, face-to-face meetings — are what allow hiring managers to actively recruit and assess candidates for the right "fit" with the company's culture. How important is personal contact to the hiring process? Even with the proliferation of dynamic new technologies, hiring managers find traditional face-to-face networking meetings to be just as important as online social sourcing tools.



We asked survey respondents to indicate how effective each of the following networking methods was for sourcing candidates.

Networking methods	Effectiveness
Traditional networking meetings	7.3
Online networking	7.1
Professional associations	6.7
Industry-specific conferences	6.5
Topic-specific conferences	6.1
Community, business or professional events	5.8
Tradeshows	5.6
Alumni events	5.5
Career fairs	5.3
Open online communities	5.2
Company-sponsored online communities	4.9

Ratings based on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents "Not at all effective" and 10 represents "Very effective."

What does direct personal interaction provide that online technologies cannot? According to our survey, hiring managers need that personal contact to find someone who will be the best fit with an organization. And that is fast becoming just as important as, if not more important than, skill and experience in the hiring process.

Fit vs. Skills

Skills will always be important when it comes to the hiring process. In fact, a “lack of job related skills” and “lack of required technical skills and experience” were among the top issues for hiring managers when it came to ultimately granting candidates an interview.

However, the biggest overall recruiting challenge identified by our respondents was “identifying talent for cultural fit.” This is a measurement of how well an individual, regardless of skills and experience, will mesh with a specific company. Moreover, when asked about the importance of specific characteristics when assessing candidates, cultural fit was in second place behind only attitude.

We asked how challenging the following issues would be over the next two to three years in relation to sourcing candidates.

Challenge	Level of challenge
Identifying talent for cultural fit	7.9
Identifying skilled talent	7.5
Speed	7.2
Matching skills with needs	7.0
Leveraging new technology to identify talent	6.6
Filling temporary opportunities	5.9
Filling non-traditional opportunities	5.4

Rate using a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents “Not at all challenging” and 10 represents “Extremely challenging.”



Why is there so much focus on cultural fit? Many organizations are coming to the realization that while skills can always be taught to a candidate, cultural fit is something bred in the bone of a new hire. If a candidate's values and overall attitude run contrary to the hiring organization, very little can be done to teach those attributes.

Complicating matters is the reality that cultural fit is a nuanced quality, and as such very difficult to identify and assess. Online social sourcing, recruiting and assessment tools simply cannot, at present, effectively evaluate values and behaviors to determine if an individual candidate is a good organizational fit. Face-to-face interactions remain fundamental to achieving this hiring objective.

Determining cultural fit can be extremely challenging. Companies engaged in hiring can benefit from developing a fuller understanding of what their culture actually represents, then translating that understanding directly to the talent market, to their own people and to their talent sourcing partners.



In the future, career transition firms will need to act as talent brokers helping candidates to build active relationships with recruiters and hiring managers at a range of companies.

Fostering Personal Connections

The central conclusion in our survey is that personal mediation of the hiring process—social sourcing, recruiting and assessing for fit—gives hiring managers the best chance to hire the right person, both for the job and the organization.

It is equally clear that technology alone cannot fully address the challenges associated with finding the best talent. Instead, companies will increasingly need to find ways to foster more direct human interaction.

Many organizations are making strides in this area by leveraging technology—hosting virtual career fairs and participating in online communities—to reach out to as many potential candidates as possible. These powerful tools can help bring together talent and talent-hungry organizations. However, these tools work best when that initial contact ultimately is with a talent broker who helps advise and direct the candidate, and then fosters direct and personal contact with a hiring organization.

Generating the personal contact necessary to fully assess a candidate for fit is no easy task. Many hiring managers have too many positions to fill, and too many potential candidates to vet.

In these scenarios, a ‘talent broker,’ someone with a comprehensive understanding of both the company’s needs and the candidates’ skills and attitudes, can help organizations maximize the likelihood of getting access to someone who fits both the organization and the job.

Examining the survey results, it is clear that hiring managers are already moving towards a “next-phase” model of talent acquisition where technology and traditional personal contact work hand in hand. In this phase, hiring managers can focus their attention on candidates whose skills, attitudes, behaviors and values are pre-vetted.

In the future, talent acquisition will need to extend to all aspects of an organization’s workforce: initiatives to upgrade the skills of existing talent, or source rare or difficult-to-find skill sets. It will extend to a re-imagining of career transition to help employees connect more quickly, and more effectively, with new, well fitting jobs. All of this requires the attention of talent brokers who have developed personal relationships with employees throughout their careers. It allows people to leverage evolving skill sets for their benefit, and the benefit of current and future employers



Not a New Hiring Paradigm— A Better One

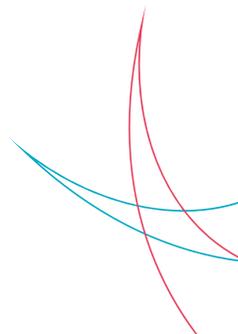
With so many recruiting and hiring channels available, and so much great talent on the market, what are the most effective methods to find the best people and determine if they are the right fit for you and your organization? The stakes are high given that a bad hire is an assault both on your bottom line and your brand.

As organizations rely more on social media and other technology platforms to drive the hiring process, they will have to ensure they do not drift too far away from methodologies that involve the human factor.

Do they still require the intervention of specialized individuals who can turn the data produced by skills-based search-and-connect technologies into insights? Do they need mediators who can effectively recruit and engage talent, putting the right people in the right jobs at the right companies?

The survey certainly suggests that hiring managers still find the human touch necessary. Technology may ultimately evolve to the point where it can assess for cultural fit. But for now, this capability does not yet exist. And the survey results show that hiring managers do not feel the pressure to eliminate personal contact as an effective tool of talent acquisition.

Going forward, it seems unlikely that the traditional personal contact will be usurped by technology. In fact, the organizations destined to win the war for talent will likely be those that learn how to blend and balance new technologies with the knowledge and insights that real people bring to the recruiting and hiring process.



About the research

This study examined candidate sourcing and hiring trends among Human Resources managers with responsibility for sourcing and/or hiring candidates for their companies. A total of 277 online interviews were conducted, representing all company sizes, across North America, Latin America, EMEA and Asia-Pacific, and represented all major industries.

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As the Senior Vice President, Career Transition Practice Leader for Lee Hecht Harrison, Greg is responsible for developing, disseminating and monitoring the direction of career transition services for the world's largest career services firm. This includes identifying and articulating global trends while assisting in the development and implementation of the short and long term global strategy of the organization.

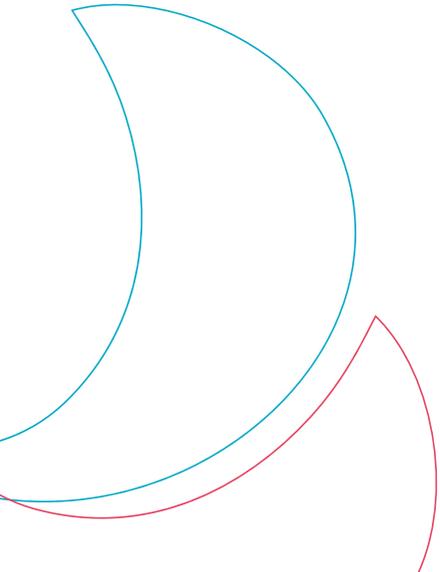
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About Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH)

Lee Hecht Harrison helps companies simplify the complexity associated with transforming their leadership and workforce so they can accelerate results, with less risk. We do this by helping their employees navigate change, become better leaders, develop better careers, and transition into new jobs. As the world's leading integrated Talent Development and Transition company, we have the local expertise, global infrastructure, and industry leading technology required to simplify the complexity associated with executing critical talent and workforce initiatives, reducing brand and operational risk. Teams in more than 60 countries around the world leverage our proven programs and global experience to deliver tailored solutions to clients that align talent with the needs of their business.

