



2024-2025

Hiring Benchmark Report

Key insights into how organizations
attract, hire, and retain talent

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About the Report

Every year, we survey hiring professionals from across all industries to learn more about how they attract, hire, and retain their teams.

For our seventh annual report, we explore the state of hiring in 2024.

2024 has been an odd year for hiring. With the Wall Street Journal declaring an end to the “talent-war era,” 2024 seems to mark a transition from a candidate-driven market to an employer-driven one, where candidates no longer have the advantage. Does this shift automatically translate into an easier time for companies to hire? Our data suggests otherwise.

Thanks to an uncertain economic climate, the picture is far more complex. Our report explores how major factors such as rapid advancements in AI, the skills gap, and remote work continue to impact the world of hiring.

The results in this report are based on a survey of 425+ hiring professionals across organizations large and small, and across a wide breadth of industries. Responses were collected in July 2024. The report surveyed a global audience, with the majority of respondents hailing from the United States, Australia, and Canada.

Who We Are

Criteria empowers companies of all sizes to hire and develop top talent with assessments, interviews, and employee development resources that are grounded in science and designed to engage candidates, highlight potential, reduce bias, and drive superior outcomes. We are fascinated by all things hiring, and we built this report to explore how modern organizations hire today. Visit us at criteriacorp.com



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Key Insights From the Report

1

Over half of hiring professionals plan to hire more next year.

Small businesses are especially more likely to expect growth.

2

Only 1 in 5 hiring professionals admit to ghosting a candidate.

Yet according to our candidate survey earlier this year, 38% of candidates say they've been ghosted just within the last year.

3

70% of hiring professionals believe we're facing a talent shortage.

The hardest skills to find include industry-specific knowledge and soft skills.

4

Over half of companies are adopting skills-based hiring.

To accomplish this, 74% of those companies have started to evaluate skills in new ways, while 68% are rewriting job descriptions to emphasize skills. Meanwhile, one in five have removed college degree requirements.

5

A quarter of hiring professionals are now using AI for hiring and/or talent management.

This doubled from last year. But AI still has ground to cover when gaining trust – only 9% of respondents trust AI more than traditional recruitment methods.

6

3 in 4 hiring professionals say emotional intelligence is the most important skill to look for in job candidates.

This was closely followed by analytical thinking, flexibility/agility, and resilience.



01

The Hiring Landscape

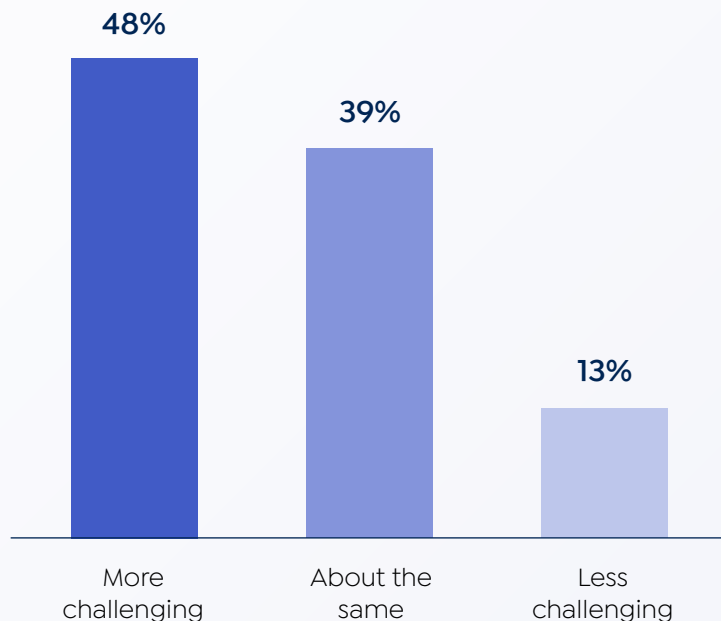


Hiring isn't getting easier. It's getting harder.

While all signs point to an increasingly employer-driven market, employers aren't seeing much of a benefit from it. In fact, they are struggling. Of the 400+ hiring professionals surveyed, 48% say that hiring in 2024 is more challenging compared to last year, while just 13% say that it's easier. 39% say it's about the same.

Those in the healthcare and technology industries were more likely to say that hiring is getting more difficult compared to other industries.

Is hiring in 2024 more challenging compared to last year?



Percentage who say hiring is more challenging this year:

All Respondents

48%

By Industry

Technology

57%

Finance

51%

Manufacturing

43%

Healthcare

70%

Professional Services

35%

Staffing/Recruiting

52%

Key Takeaway

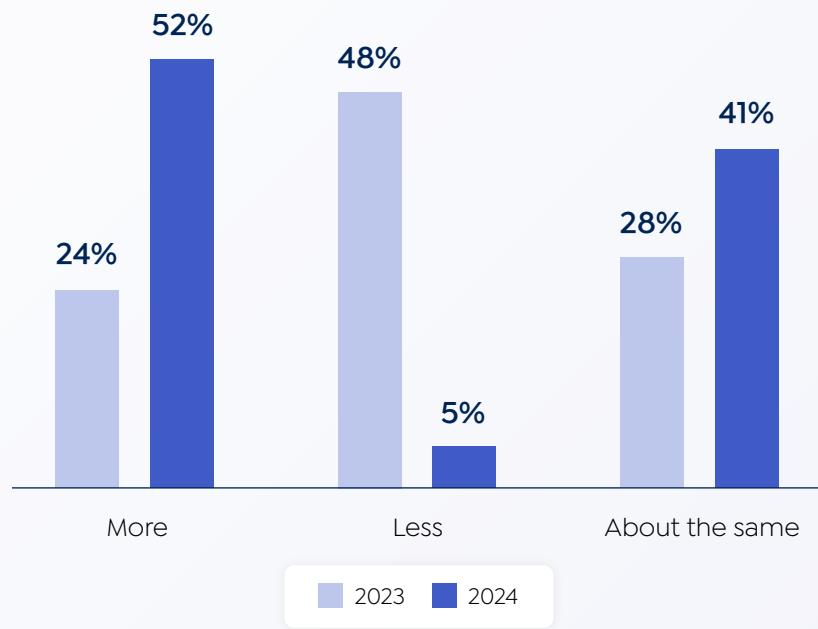
The overall job market remains relatively healthy, and employers now hold most of the cards. So why the struggle? In the rest of this report, we'll highlight some of the compounding factors that may be contributing to these challenges.

Hiring may finally be picking up.

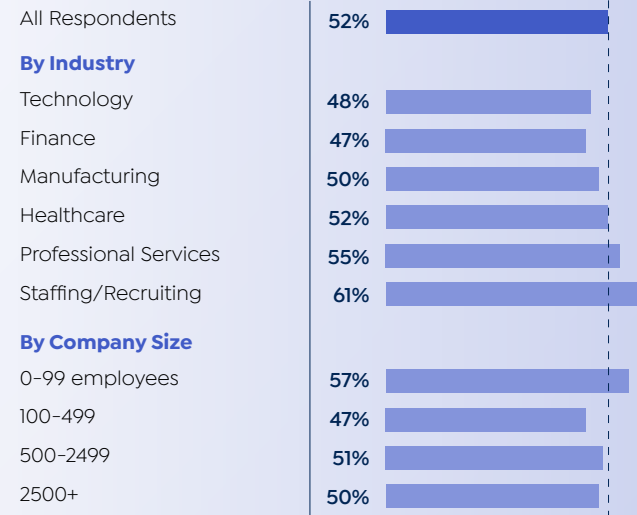
52% of hiring professionals say they plan to hire more people next year, while only 5% say they plan to hire less. This sits in stark contrast to the results of our survey last year, where only 24% of people planned to hire more, and 48% expected to hire less.

Smaller companies with fewer than 100 employees were slightly more likely to expect to hire more people next year compared to larger companies. Meanwhile, the staffing industry also expected higher than average growth.

Next year, do you expect to hire more, less, or about the same as this year?



Percentage who are planning to hire more next year:



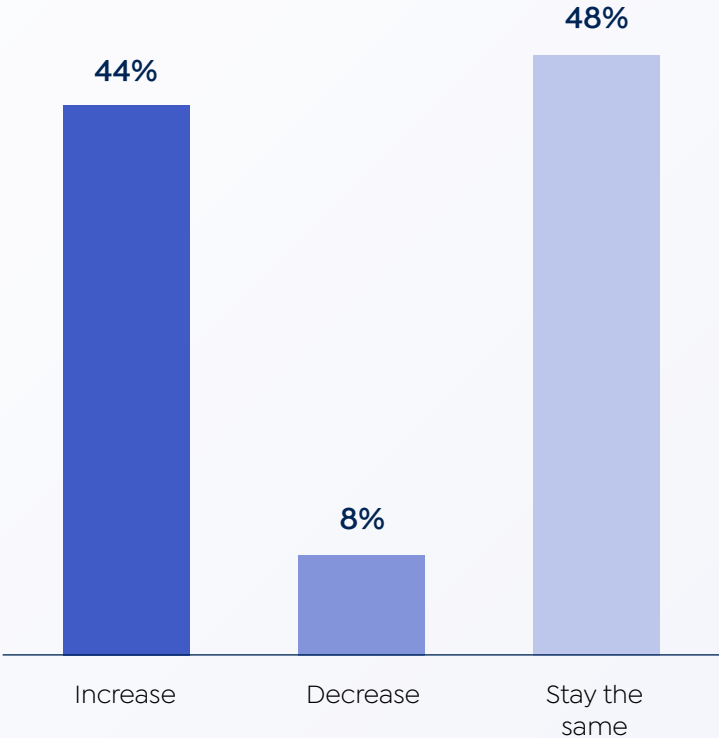
Key Takeaway

2023 was characterized by steep interest rates, layoffs, and recession fears, leading many companies to take a conservative “wait and see” approach to hiring. This survey data indicates that hiring professionals expect this to lift next year. The majority of hiring professionals expect their hiring to increase next year – 120% more people than last year.

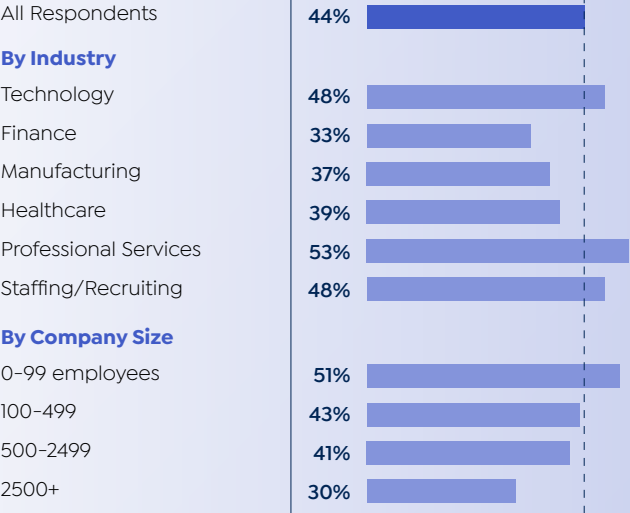
Budgets are also on the rise.

44% of hiring professionals expect their hiring and recruiting budget to increase next year, while 48% expect it to stay the same, and just 8% expect it to go down. Small businesses were the most likely to anticipate higher budgets, while larger organizations were the least.

Compared to 2024’s budget, do you expect your 2025 budget to:



Percentage who expect their budget to increase:



Food for Thought

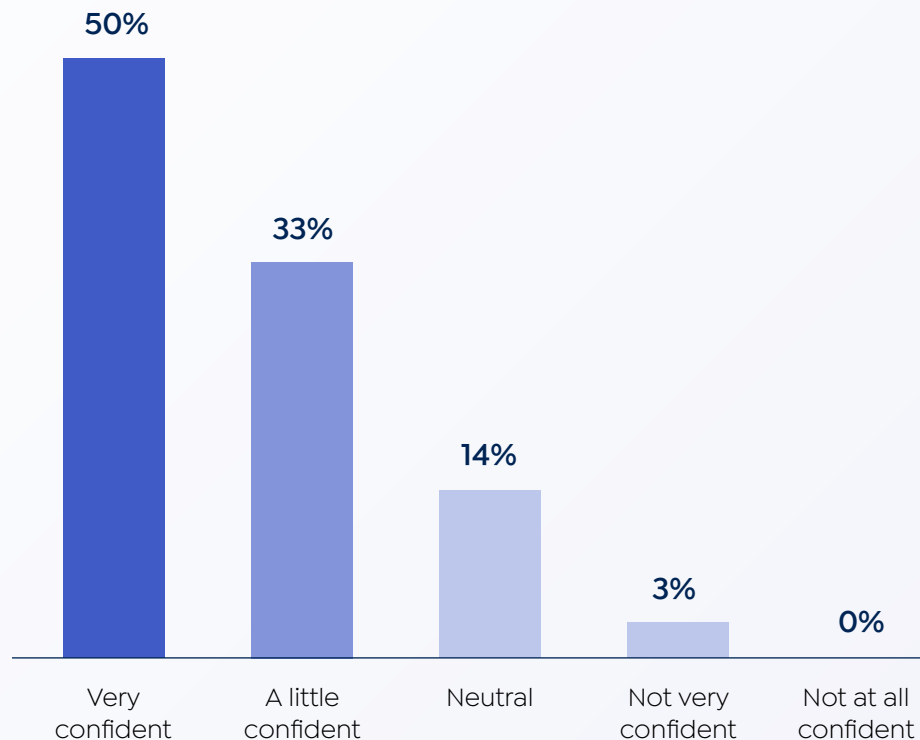
Curious what that extra budget might go towards? Jump to [page 32](#) where we highlight the top priorities that organizations have for next year.



Hiring professionals remain confident in their hiring practices.

Every year, we ask hiring professionals how confident they are in their current practices. This year, half of the respondents feel very confident, a strong response. A third feel a little confident, while very few say that they lack confidence.

How confident are you in your current hiring practices?



Key Takeaway

Hiring confidence provides an indication of how well a company's current hiring processes are meeting their hiring demands. Despite the challenging landscape, hiring professionals feel relatively equipped to handle them.

02

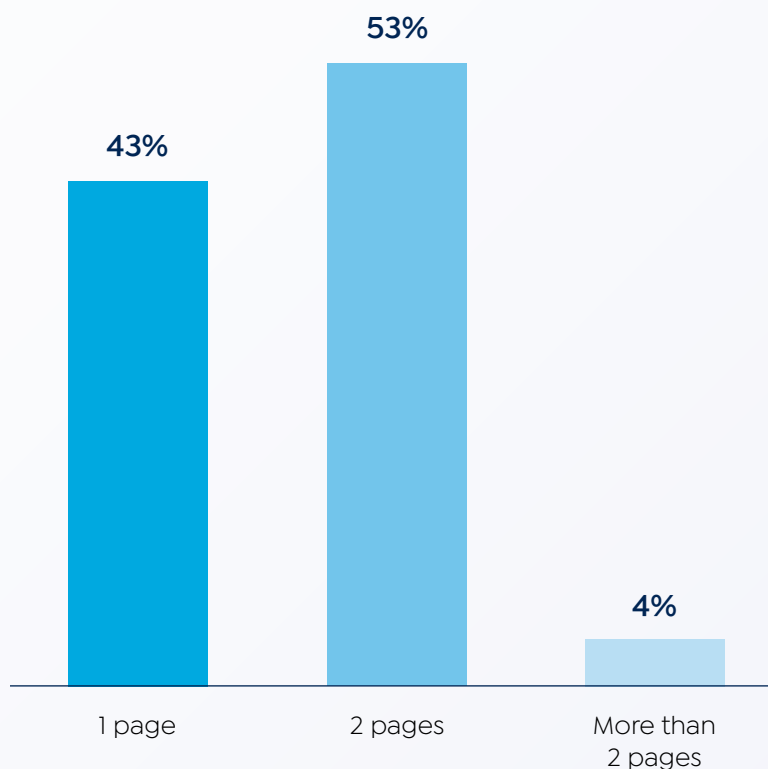
How Companies are Hiring



Is the 1-page resume dead?

For years, the prevailing wisdom was that resumes should be a single page, with some exceptions for certain industries or length of experience. But is that maxim still true? Not according to our sample of hiring professionals, for whom a majority (53%) say that resumes should be two pages in most cases. Meanwhile 43% believe that the one-page resume is still the gold standard, while just 4% think that more than 2 pages is preferable.

How long do you think a resume should be, in most cases?



« Key Takeaway »»

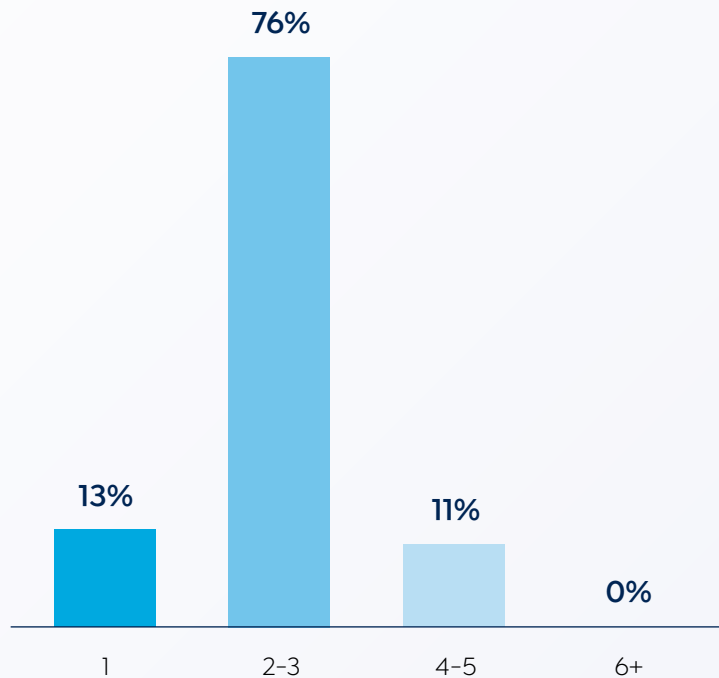
Has technology helped us “turn the page” on the one-page resume? In the past, every resume had to be reviewed by human eyes. But nowadays, most resumes pass through an ATS or AI tool that screens for keywords – and most candidates know it too. This may be a moment where the technology we use starts to impact human behavior, adjusting our expectations for what the modern resume should look like.

Two to three interviews is the sweet spot.

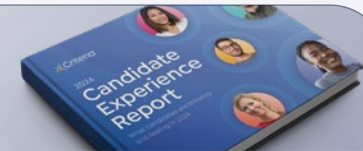
Interviews can be one of the most time-consuming parts of the hiring process, and more rounds of interviews mean more time spent before reaching a hiring decision. Too many interviews can also cause candidate fatigue and drop-off, compromising an organization's ability to compete for the best candidates. So how many rounds of interviews are typical – and how many are too much?

76% of hiring professionals say that their companies typically require candidates to go through 2-3 job interviews before getting the job. Meanwhile, data from our candidate survey earlier this year suggests that candidates can become fatigued from interviews pretty quickly. 32% of candidates said that 2-3 interview rounds was too many, while 52% said 4-5 was too many.

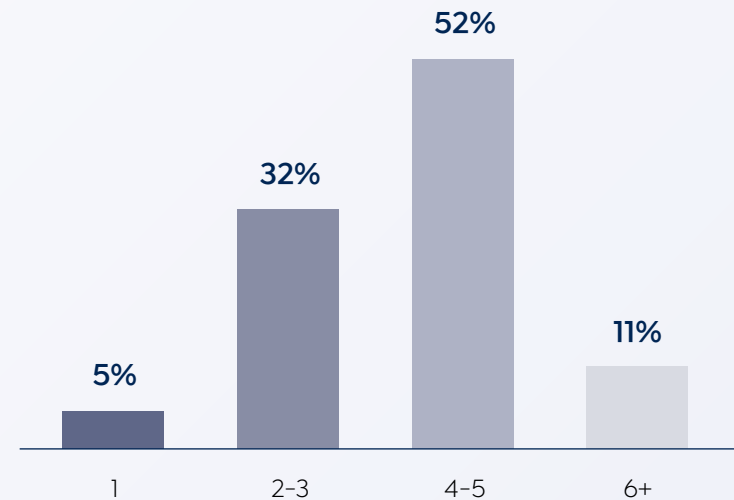
On average, how many rounds of interviews do candidates go through to get a job at your company?



Question from the 2024
Candidate Experience Report



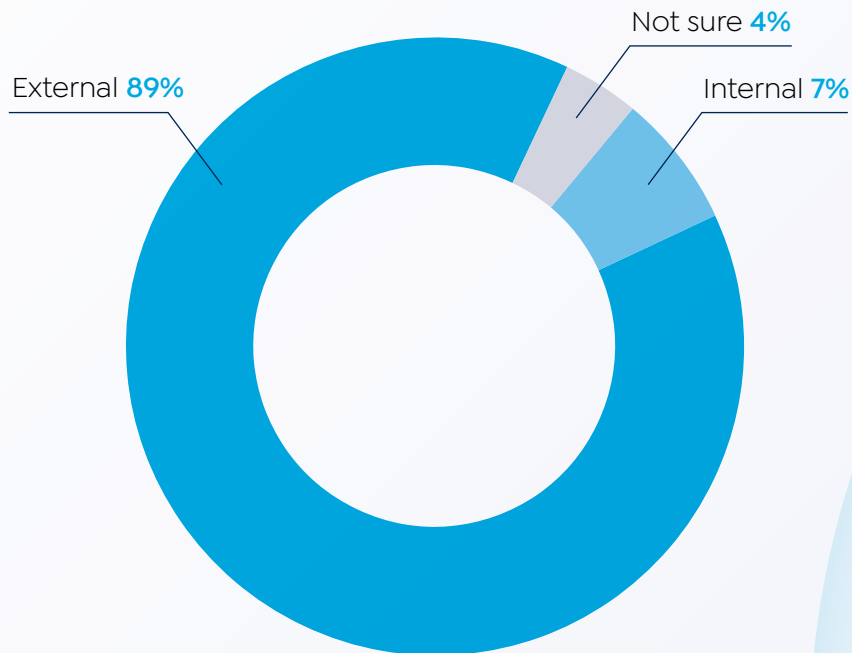
How many rounds of interviews is too many?



Unsurprisingly, most new hires are sourced externally. But are internal hires underexplored?

89% of companies source most of their new hires externally, while just 7% of companies make most of their new hires from internal candidates. While this is far from surprising, it may highlight a missed opportunity. Based on our 2024 Candidate Experience Report which surveys 2,500+ job candidates, the number one thing that candidates prioritize when choosing their next role is opportunities for career advancement. Candidates ranked this even higher than compensation and work-life balance. Companies that emphasize promotion tracks and internal mobility may be more attractive to job candidates and better positioned to win over top talent, while increasing retention and engagement in the long-run.

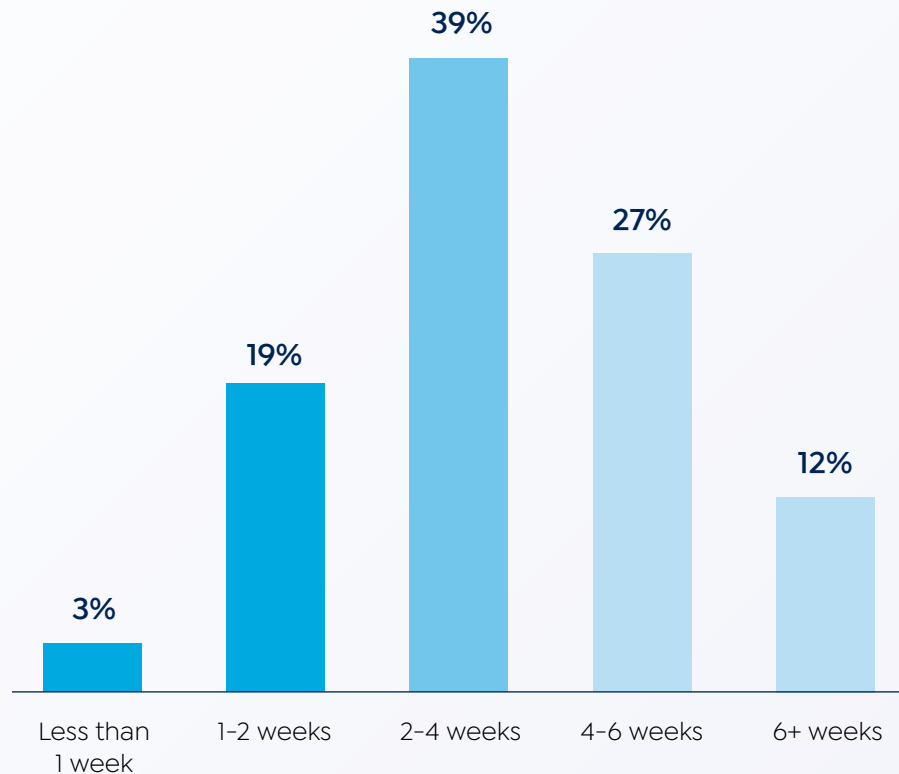
Where are most of your company's new hires sourced from?



Most hires are made within 2-6 weeks.

Hiring speed can be a huge advantage when competing for top talent. 3% of hiring professionals say their average hiring process takes less than a week, from the time a job is posted to the time an offer is made. 19% say it takes a still impressive 1 to 2 weeks. 39% say they can complete the process in 2 to 4 weeks, while 27% say it takes 4 to 6 weeks, and 12% say it takes more than 6 weeks on average.

On average, how long is your hiring process?



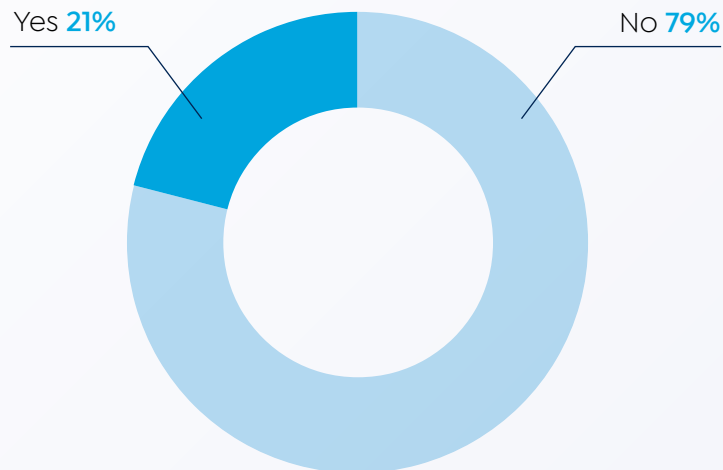
«« Key Takeaway »»

Efficiency in hiring is a balancing act. You want to gather just enough information to make an informed hiring decision, without taking too long on any of the steps in the process. The best policy is to build a hiring process that incorporates information gathering steps that are both highly efficient and highly predictive to maximize your talent signal - and to eliminate any steps that aren't serving that goal.

Only 21% of hiring professionals admit to *ghosting*.

For years, both employers and candidates alike have complained about being ghosted by each other during the hiring process. When employers ghost candidates, they risk damaging the company's reputation and employer brand. According to our 2024 Candidate Experience Report, which surveyed more than 2,500 job candidates, 38% of candidates reported that they had been ghosted by an employer within the last year alone. However, in this survey of hiring professionals, we asked if they've ever ghosted a job candidate, and only 21% admitted to it in the past.

Have you ever ghosted a job candidate?

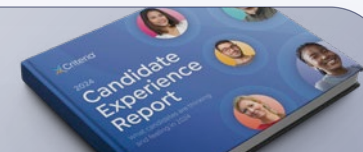


« Key Takeaway »»

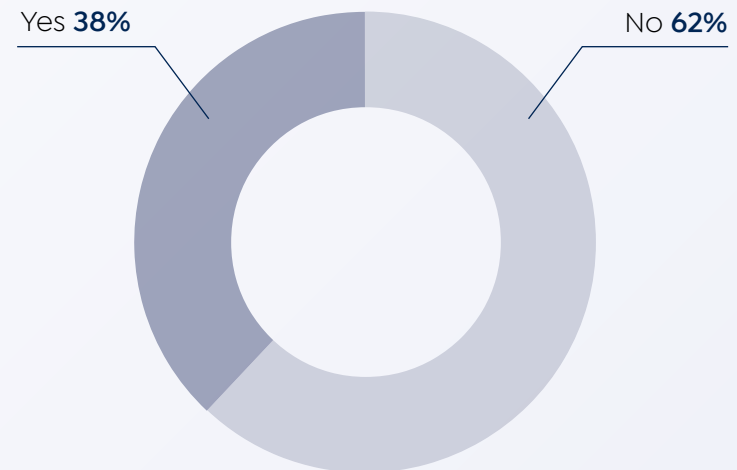
Whether intentional or not, candidates are getting ghosted more than hiring professionals may realize. To bolster the candidate experience, it's always a good idea to audit your communication strategy to make sure that candidates aren't slipping through the cracks.



Question from the 2024 Candidate Experience Report



In the last year, have you been ghosted by an employer/recruiter?



03

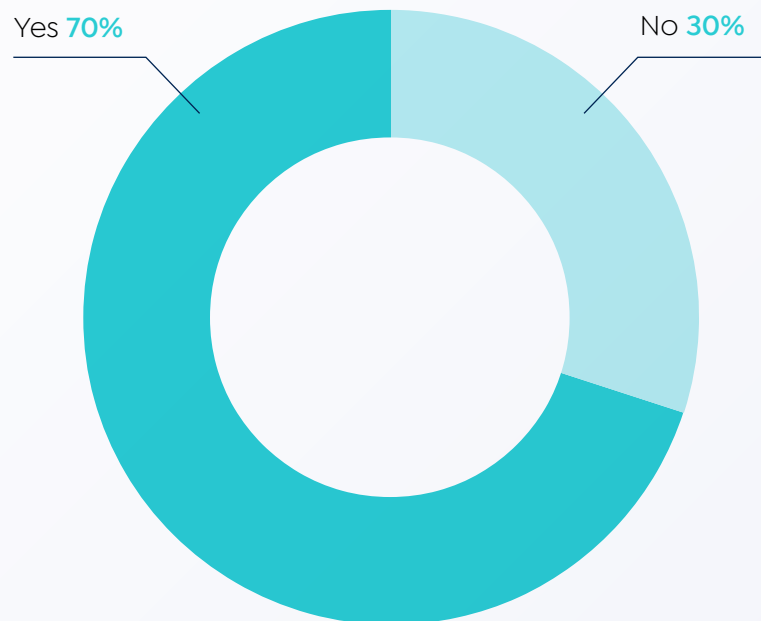
Skills-Based Hiring



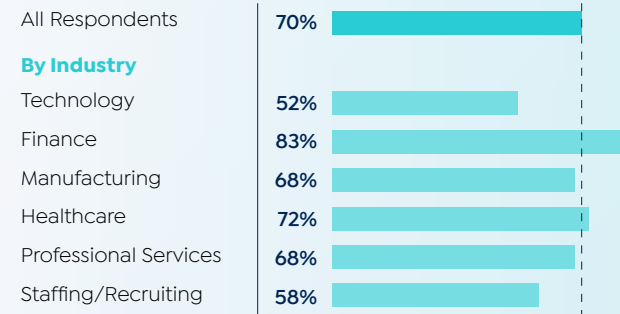
70% of hiring professionals believe we are facing a *talent shortage*.

The right skills are hard to find according to hiring professionals today, with 70% saying that we're facing a talent shortage. Interestingly, those in technology were the least likely to say that there is a talent shortage, while those in finance were the most likely (83%).

In today's hiring landscape, do you believe there is a talent shortage?



Percentage who say we are facing a talent shortage:



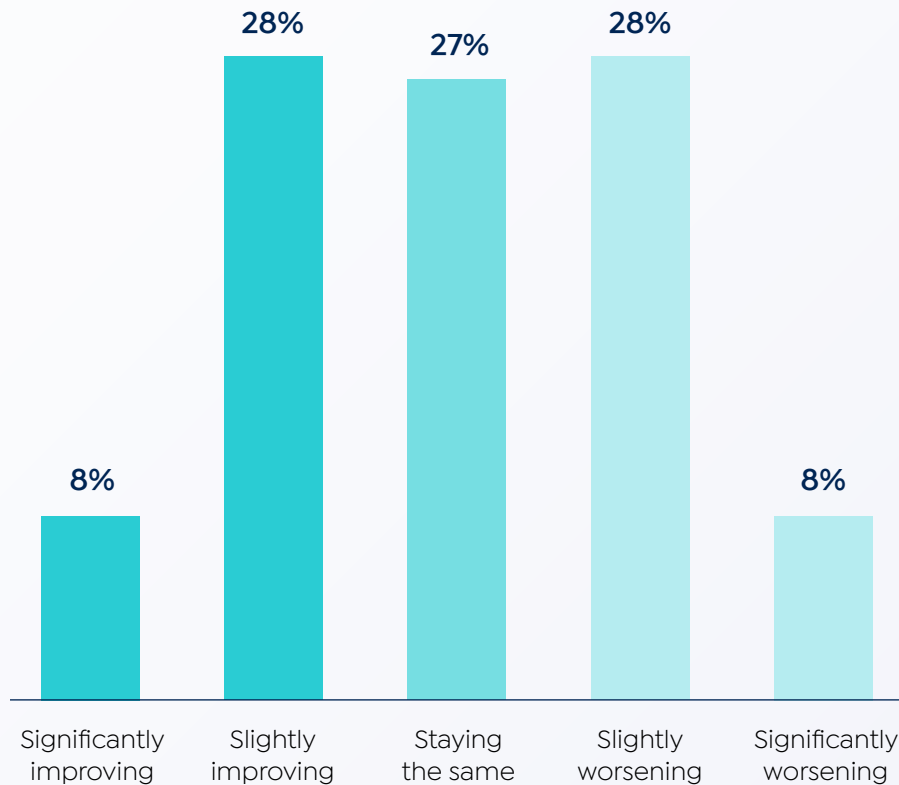
« Key Takeaway »

How can a talent shortage exist at the same time as an employer-driven market? The answer may come down to rapid advancements in technology, new job functions arising, and a shift in the types of skills that companies need.

The talent shortage may be here to stay.

How long will this talent shortage last? The picture seems cloudy to our sample of hiring professionals, who fall mostly in the middle of believing that the talent shortage will persist over the next five years.

How do you foresee the talent shortage evolving over the next five years?



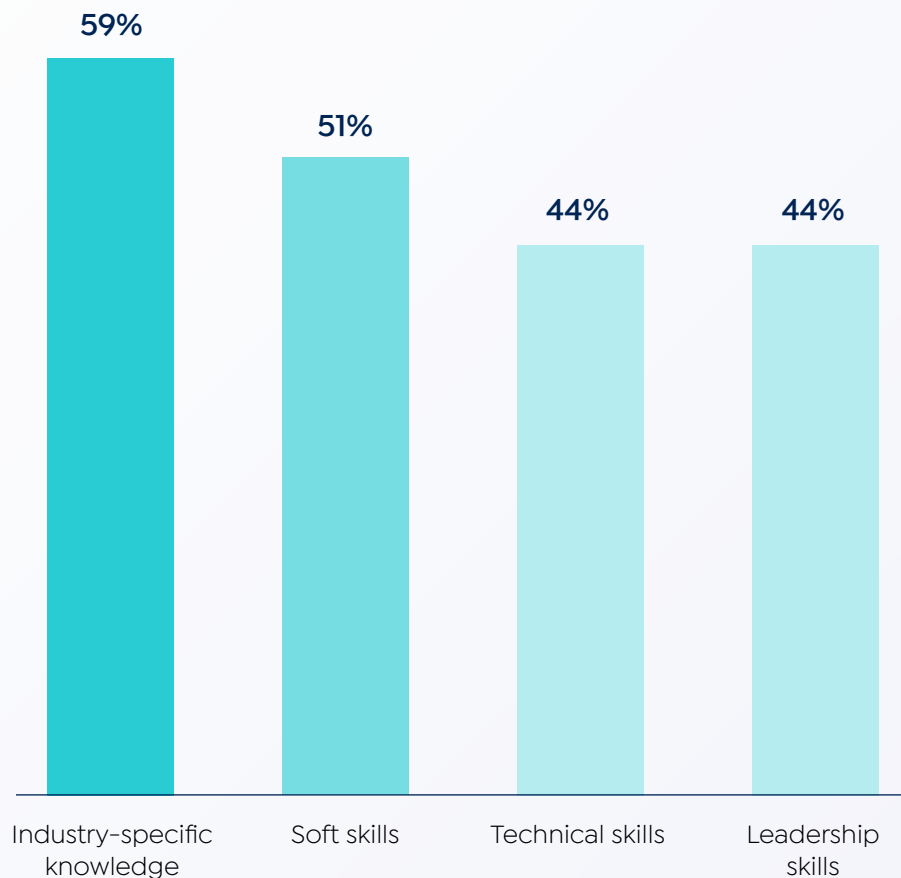
«« Key Takeaway »»

With no end in sight to the talent shortage, we're seeing companies turn to a skills-based approach to hiring in order to fill the gap, prioritizing transferable skills and raw potential over previous experience.

Some skills are harder to find than others.

Which skills are in short supply? 59% of hiring professionals say that industry-specific knowledge is the hardest to find, suggesting that employers are struggling to find candidates with direct job experience. Half (51%) of hiring professionals say soft skills are hardest to find, while 44% say technical skills and leadership skills are especially hard to find.

What specific skills are hardest to find in job candidates?



«« Food for Thought »»

When industry-specific knowledge and past experience are hard to find, employers may need to turn to other methods like skills-based hiring, which we'll see on the next page.

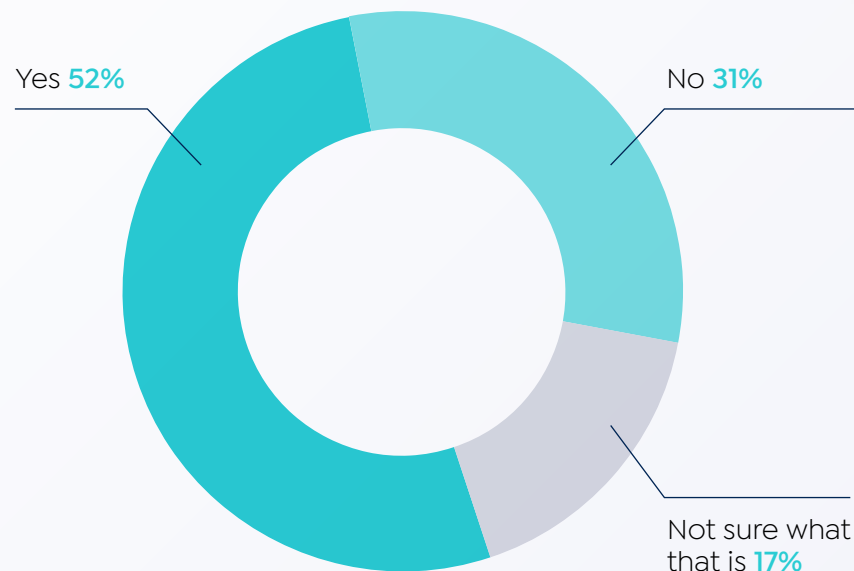


Over half of companies are adopting skills-based hiring.

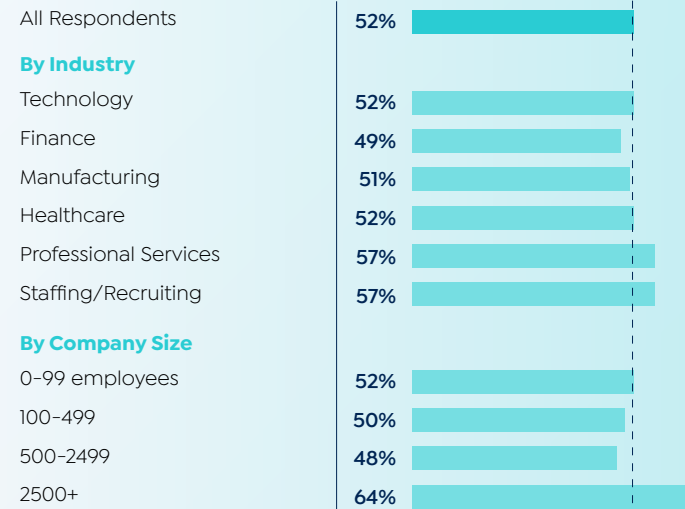
Skills-based hiring has exploded in popularity over the last few years, primarily as a response to the talent shortages that many industries are facing. More than half (52%) of hiring professionals say they have implemented skills-based hiring in the last year, while 31% haven't, and 17% aren't quite sure what it is. Of those who haven't implemented it yet, 27% plan to do so in the coming year.

Meanwhile, larger organizations (2,500+ employees) were the most likely to say they were moving to a skills-based approach.

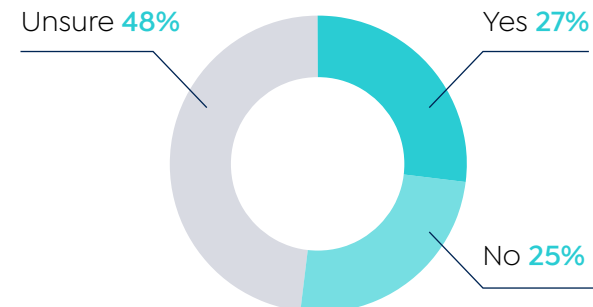
Have you implemented skills-based hiring in the last year?



Percentage who have implemented skills-based hiring:



If not, do you plan to incorporate skills-based hiring in the coming year?

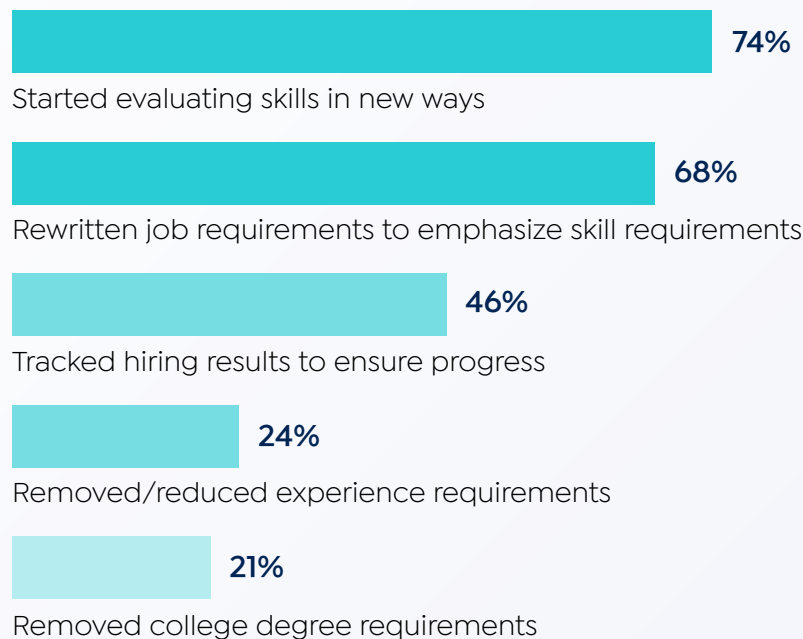


What does it mean to take a skills-based approach?

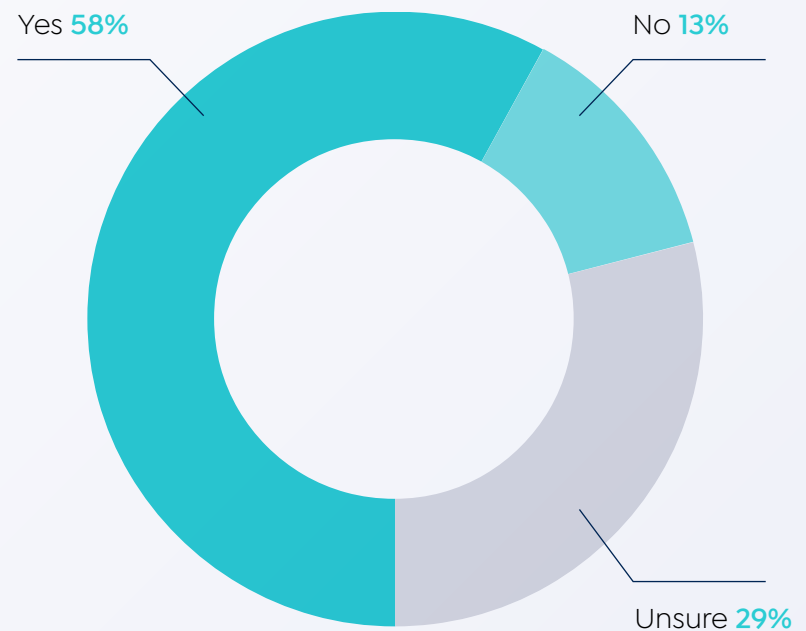
While definitions may vary, skills-based hiring at its core refers to an approach that prioritizes a candidate's potential over past job experience or formal education. When it comes to putting this into practice, each organization takes a different approach. Of those 52% who said they implemented skills-based hiring in the last year, 74% have started to evaluate skills in new ways, while 68% have rewritten job requirements to emphasize skill requirements. 46% are tracking results to ensure progress, 24% have removed or reduced experience requirements, and only 21% have removed college degree requirements.

But is it working? The answer is yes, according to a majority (58%) of hiring professionals who say they've seen an improvement in their quality of hire since implementing skills-based hiring.

What actions have you taken to implement skills-based hiring?



After implementing skills-based hiring, have you seen an improvement in your quality-of-hire?

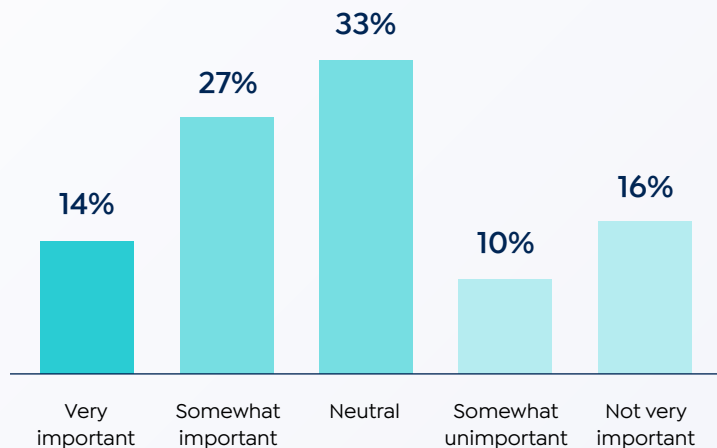


Is the college degree losing its value?

One of the biggest discussion topics around skills-based hiring is the changing value of the college degree. We asked hiring professionals how important it is that a candidate has a college degree, and a third say they are neutral about it. Only 14% say it's very important, while 27% say it's somewhat important.

Earlier this year, we asked the same question to 2,500+ candidates and found that job seekers may value the degree a little more highly. 41% believe a degree is very important, while 26% say somewhat important.

When hiring, how important is it that a candidate has a college degree?

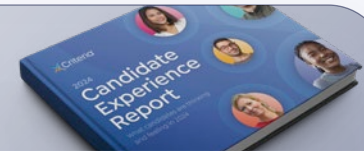


Key Takeaway

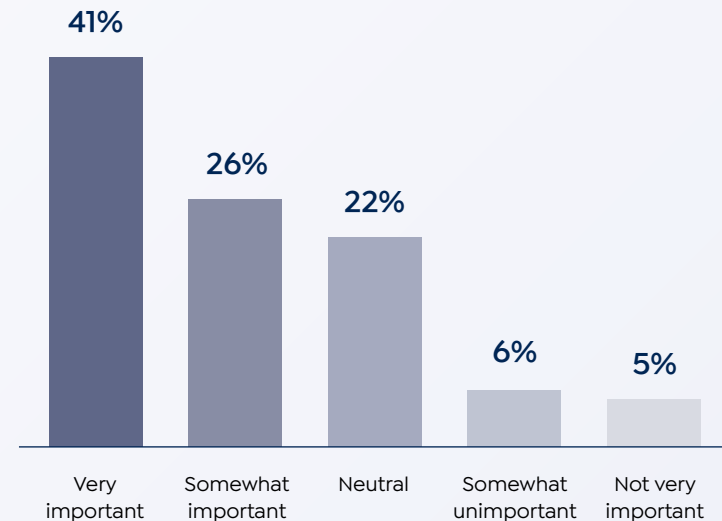
62% of US adults do not have a college degree (Bachelor's or higher), which means that the majority of workers are automatically excluded from roles that require one. With the rising cost of a college education and the recent shift towards skills-based hiring, we expect this topic to continue to generate a hearty debate over the next few years.



Question from the 2024 Candidate Experience Report



In today's job market, how important do you think it is to have a college degree?



04

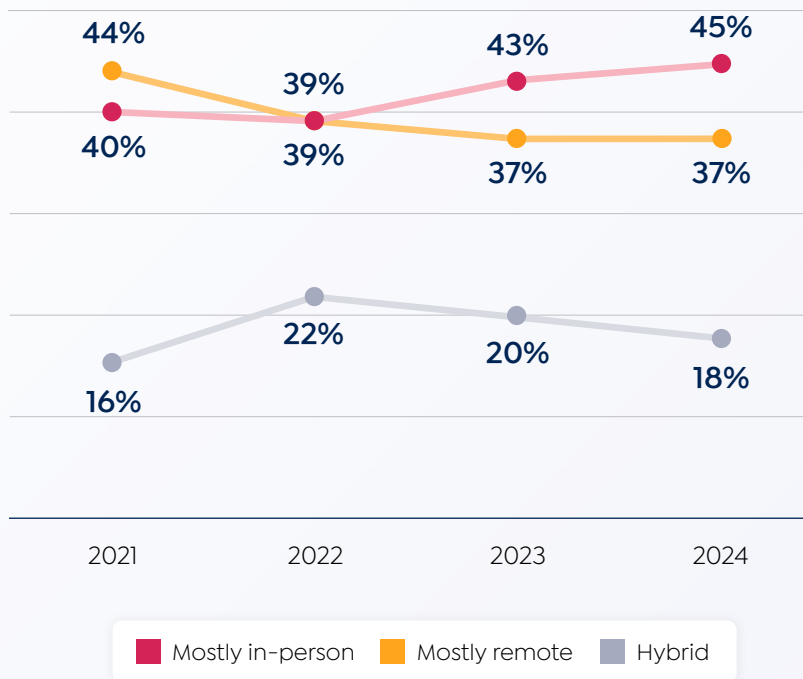
Remote Work



The return-to-office has continued.

While COVID-19 was the impetus for companies to try out remote work, that great experiment may finally be over. Today, the largest group of respondents (45%) now says that they are primarily working in-person, an increase from last year. 37% say they operate on a hybrid model, and the smallest group (18%) says that they work remotely.

What work model does your organization use now?



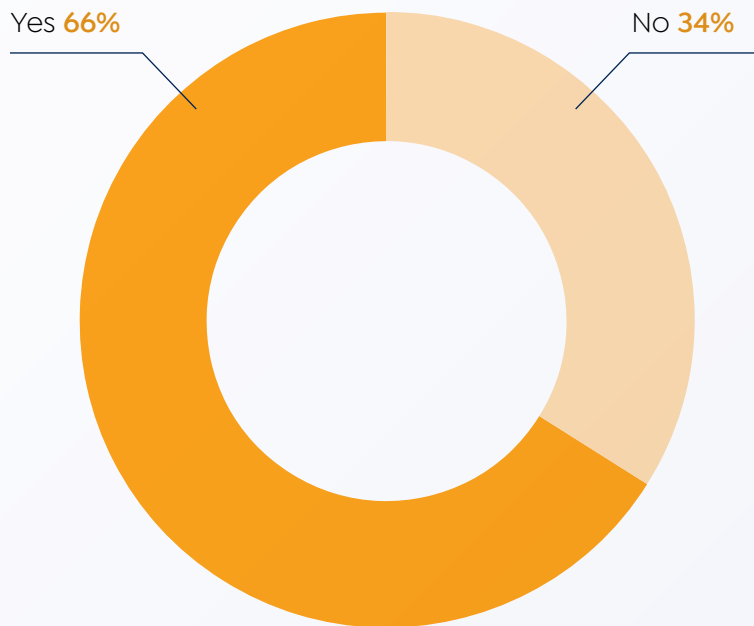
Key Takeaway

Going into the office is nothing new. But a lot of the flashy perks that used to draw employees in have been lost to the wind: think ping pong tables, beverages on tap, and on-site gyms. Alongside these lost perks, employees also risk losing their highly coveted flexibility, work-life balance, and freedom from the commute. Perhaps this is yet another sign that the market has entered an employer-driven stage, where companies can afford not to roll out the red carpet to entice talent.

Remote workplaces have a recruiting advantage.

Do remote work environments offer an advantage when hiring? Our data suggest so. Two-thirds of hiring professionals believe that a candidate's desire to accept a job is impacted by in-office requirements. Other responses indicate that hiring is generally easier for remote companies. For example, remote companies are about 20% more likely to be very confident in their hiring practices, and 35% less likely to believe that there is a talent shortage, when compared to companies that operate mostly in-person. This suggests that remote companies aren't feeling as much of a strain when securing top talent.

Have you found that a candidate's desire to accept a given job is impacted by in-office requirements?

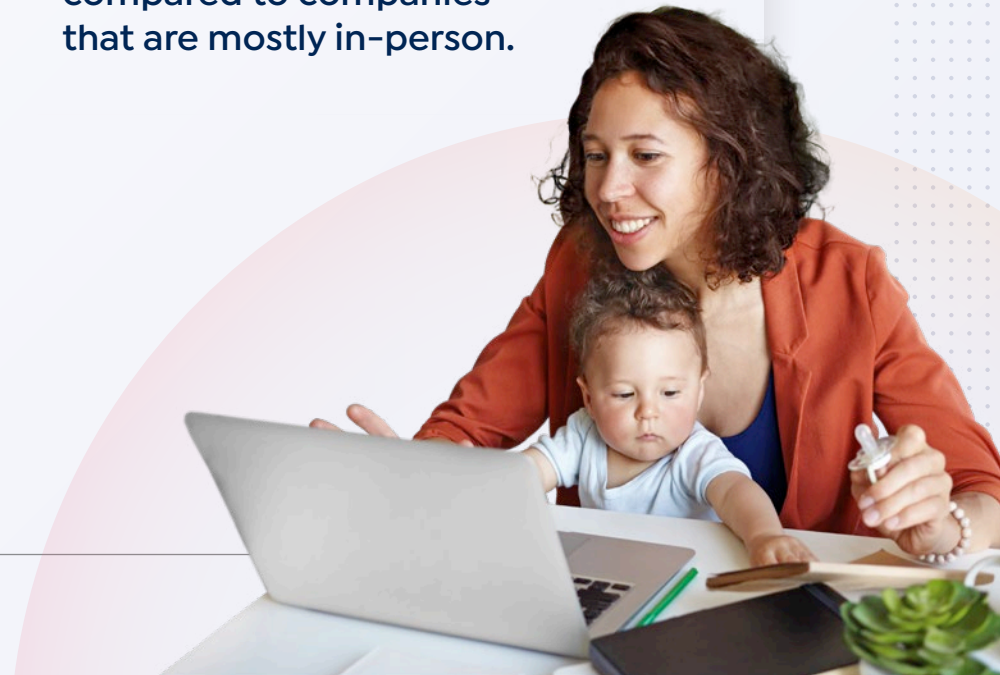


Remote companies are about:

20% more likely to be very confident in their hiring practices, and

35% less likely to believe we are facing a talent shortage

compared to companies that are mostly in-person.



05

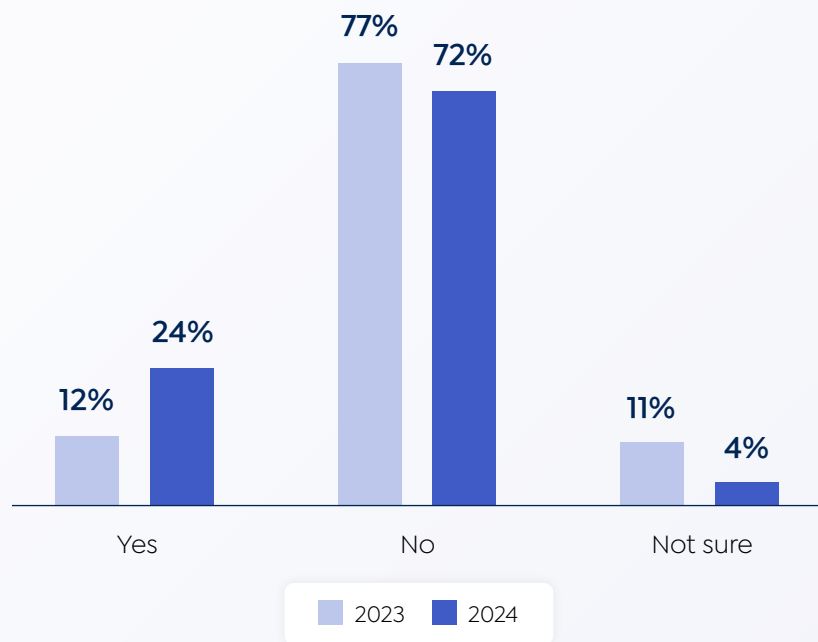
AI in Hiring



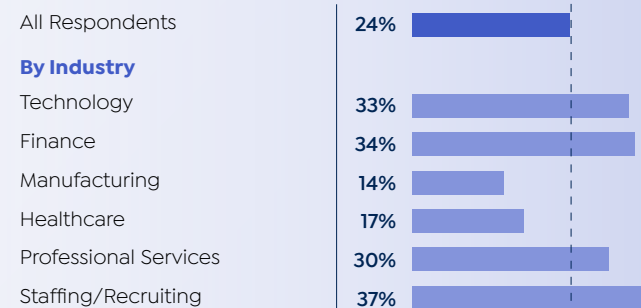
A quarter of hiring professionals are using AI in hiring or talent management – double compared to last year.

Nearly two years after ChatGPT burst onto the scene, AI has seen a dramatic increase in adoption across all areas of business, including hiring. This year, when we asked hiring professionals if they are using AI in their recruiting and/or talent management processes today, about a quarter say they do, which is double the number when we asked this same question last year. The technology and finance industries were more likely to be using AI compared to other industries, like manufacturing and healthcare.

Do you use AI in your recruiting and/or talent management processes today?



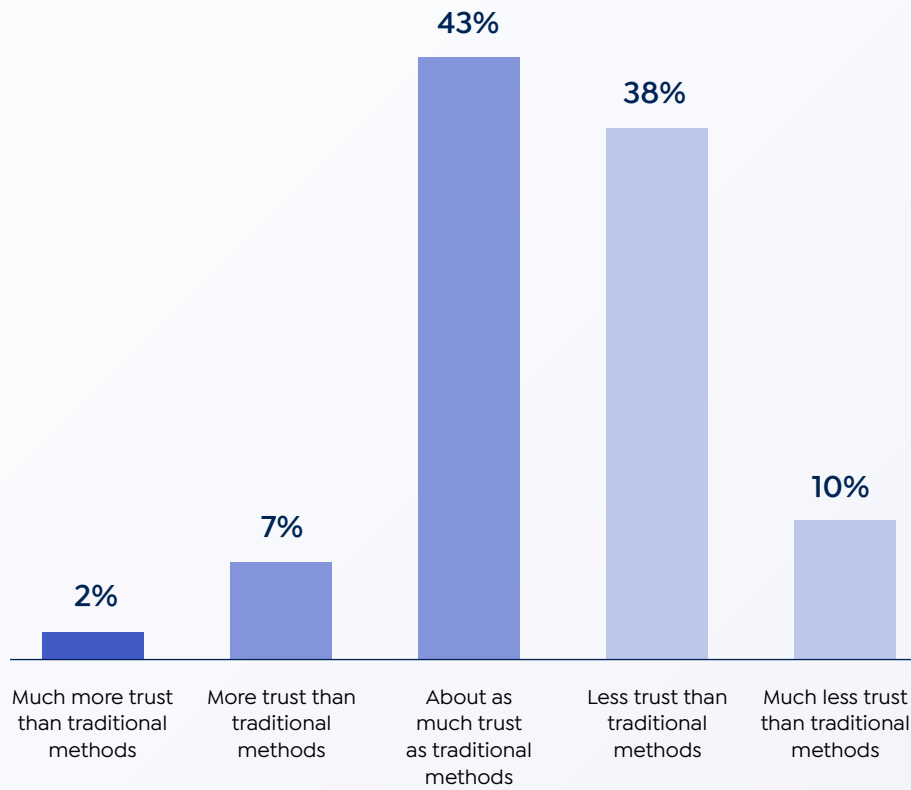
Percentage who are using AI in hiring and/or talent management:



Hiring professionals remain wary of AI.

Despite the growth in AI adoption, trust in AI is not a given. Only a combined 9% of respondents say they trust AI more than traditional hiring methods. 43% think they are on the same level, while nearly half (48%) trust it less than traditional methods.

What is your level of trust in recruitment methods that use AI as compared to traditional methods?



«« Key Takeaway »»

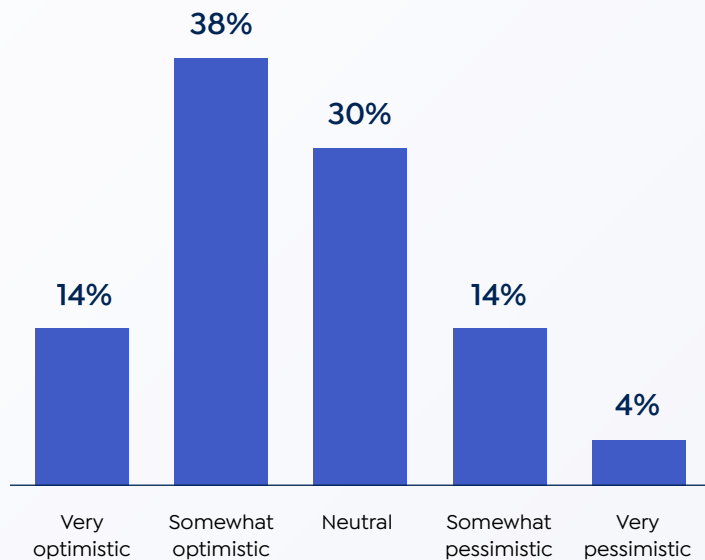
The great promise of AI is that it could potentially make hiring faster while also helping people make better hiring decisions than they could before. HR and recruiting are two very human fields, and it will take a lot of evidence and trust-building before AI will be seen as a truly valued, trusted part of the hiring process.

But they're also optimistic about AI's potential.

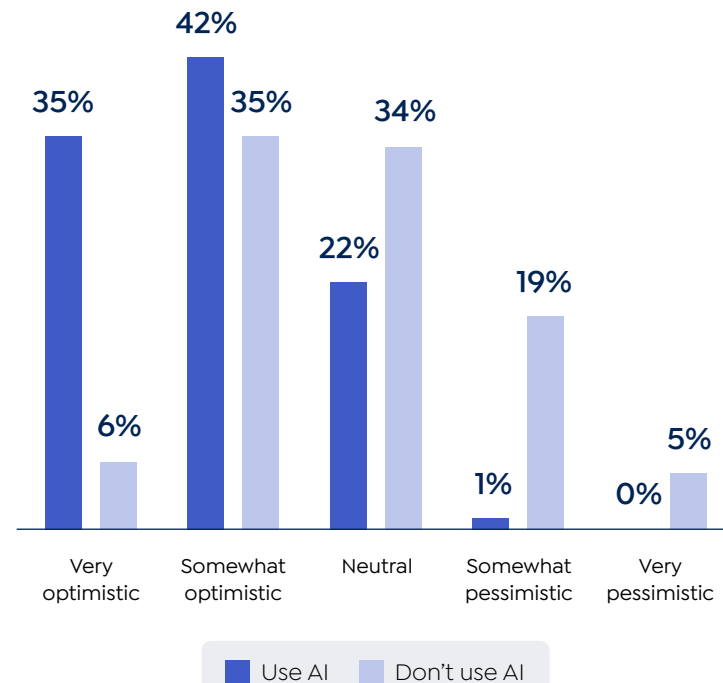
While the trust may not have been earned just yet, hiring professionals are relatively optimistic about its potential to improve the hiring process. A combined 52% feel optimistic (14% very optimistic, 38% somewhat optimistic) while 30% feel neutral about it.

Unsurprisingly, those who are already using AI in hiring are far more optimistic about AI's future role in hiring, with a combined 77% feeling optimistic.

How optimistic are you about the role AI can play in improving the hiring process?



How optimistic are you about the role AI can play in improving the hiring process?



06

Future Outlook



The most critical skills of the future are also the most human.

While AI will figure heavily in the future of work, the most important workforce skills of the future are distinctly human. Emotional intelligence earned the top spot as the most important skill for job seekers to possess, with 75% of hiring professionals selecting it, followed by 68% for analytical thinking, 66% for flexibility/agility, 61% for resilience, 57% for technological literacy, 53% for creative thinking, 46% for lifelong learning, and 38% for curiosity.



Moving forward, which of the following skills do you think are most important to look for in job candidates?



Other write-ins:

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Humility
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Tenacity
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Writing

Key Takeaway

When looking towards the future, the skills that will matter most are likely the skills that technology cannot easily replace, like emotional intelligence, flexibility, resilience, and creative thinking. Fortunately, these skills can be measured by pre-employment assessments, giving employers the opportunity to build teams that can adapt and excel into the future.

Next year, the focus will be on upskilling.

We wanted to learn more about the top three biggest priorities for hiring professionals next year. 42% of them say that they intend to focus on upskilling their current employees. 40% continue to focus on reducing turnover, while 37% want to improve employee engagement. Other areas, like increasing diversity and embracing AI, were pushed further down the priority list.

Thinking about next year, which three of the following are the biggest priority?



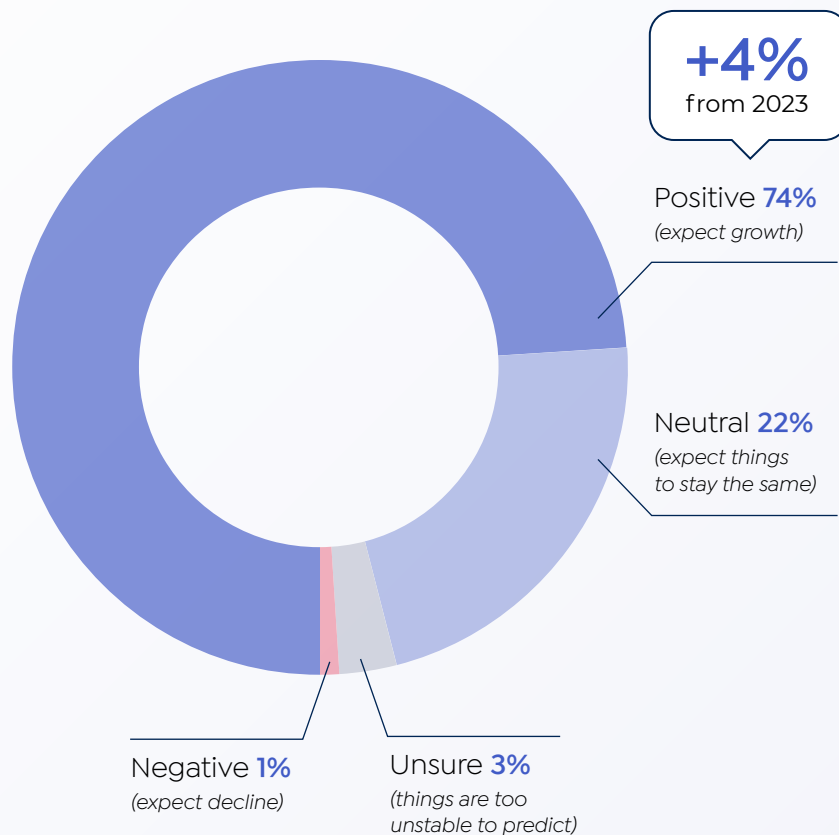
«« Key Takeaway »»

Interestingly, the top three priorities next year all relate to ways that organizations can maximize the talent they already have. This may involve strategies to improve employee development, enhance internal mobility, and support a happy and engaged workforce.

3 out of 4 hiring professionals feel optimistic for 2025.

Despite a couple of tumultuous years in a row, hiring professionals feel overwhelmingly optimistic. 74% say they expect their company to grow next year, up 4% from last year's survey.

When thinking about 2025, what is the outlook for your company?



Key Takeaway

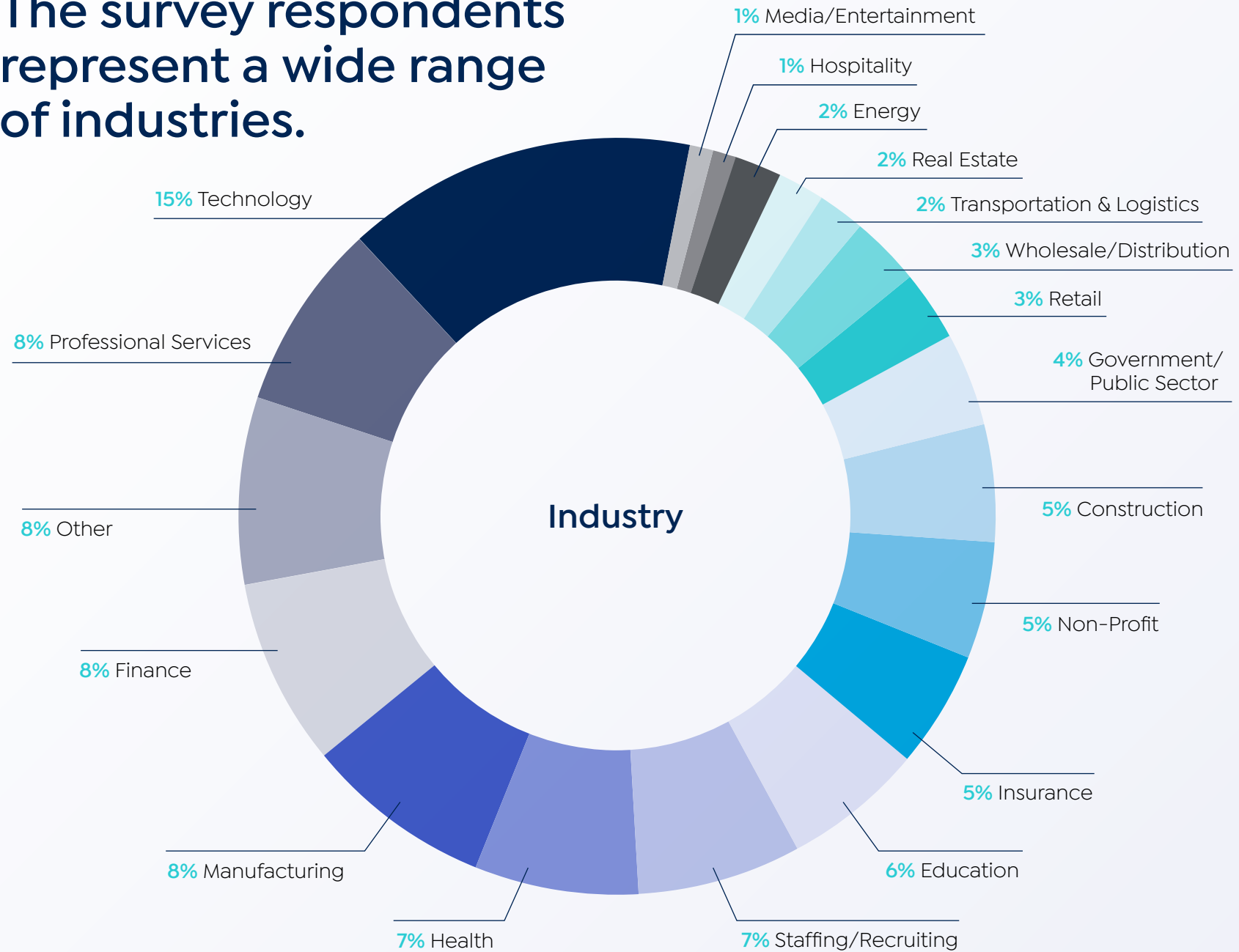
We'll be honest. The economy has been strange over the last few years. But with a relatively healthy job market ahead, an employer-driven advantage, and new strategies to uncover candidate potential, there's a lot to be optimistic about as we head into the next year.

07

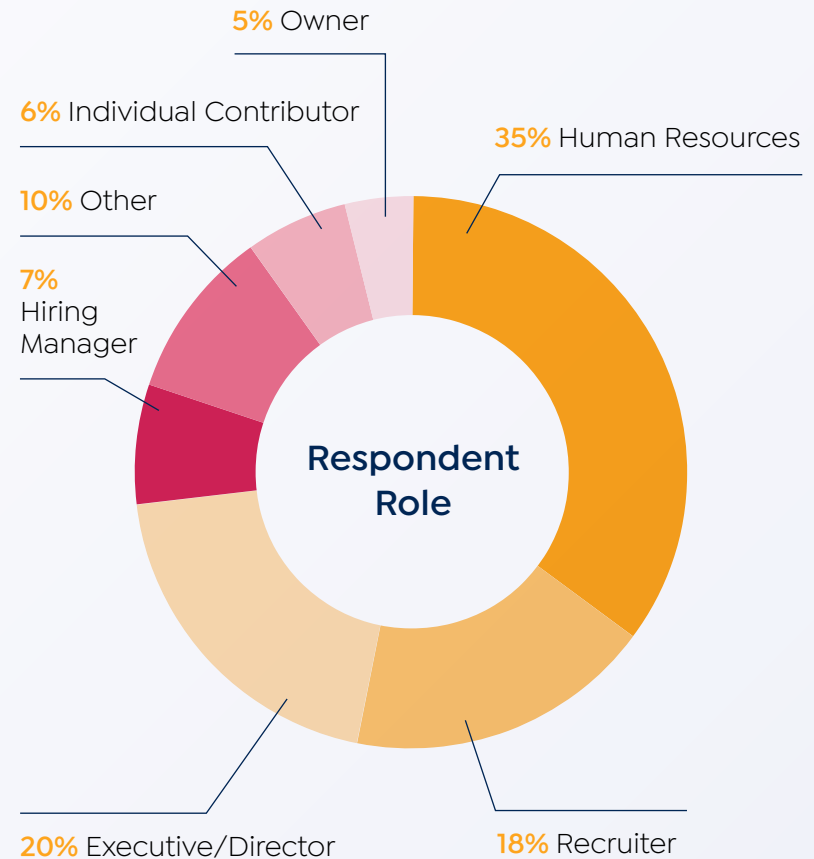
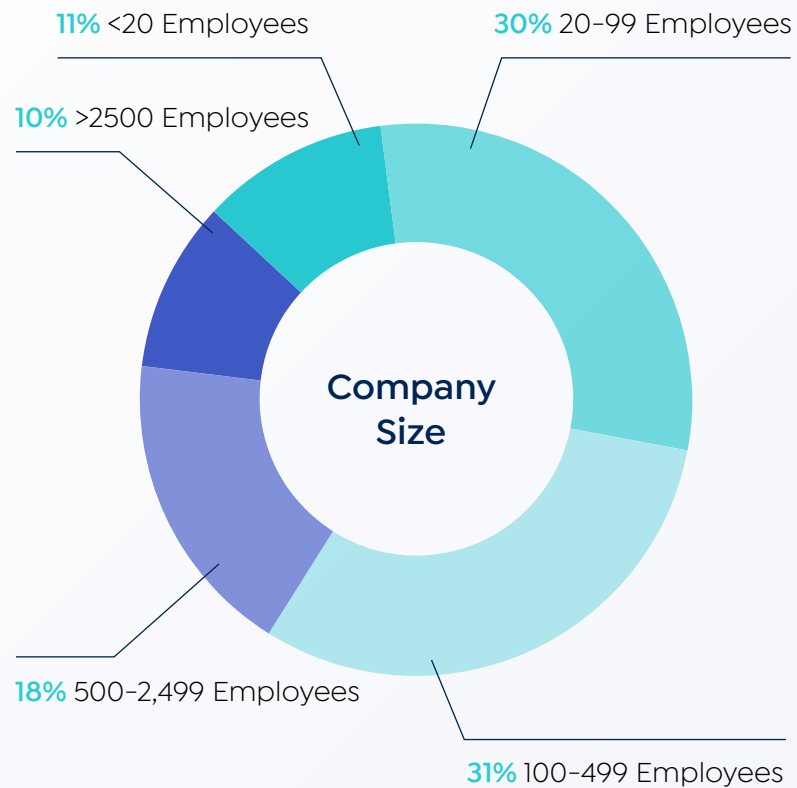
Survey Respondents



The survey respondents represent a wide range of industries.



They come from companies of all sizes and hold a range of different roles.





Better Talent Starts with Better Insights

Criteria empowers companies of all sizes to hire and develop top talent with assessments, interviews, and employee development resources that are grounded in science and designed to engage candidates, highlight potential, reduce bias, and drive superior outcomes.

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