

THE MODERN ATS (APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM) ... WHAT'S CHANGED?

An applicant tracking system is technology that automates and optimizes the recruiting process.

By deploying an ATS, HR professionals can cut through the clutter and find, source, proactively engage and evaluate the suitability of prospective talent, including those not “on the market,” aka passive candidates. Additionally, there is a subset of ATS platforms that include “recruitment marketing” capabilities that can then be leveraged to:

- Stay connected to targeted talent
- Create communities of value to keep them engaged
- Communicate personalized messages that market an organization’s brand and culture
- Track what types of communications and outreach efforts work best with different types of candidates and roles

Really — an ATS can do all that? Yes, really!

Here’s one of the main ways ATS platforms (aka Talent Acquisition Technology) have evolved in recent years.

While a traditional ATS automates the application process for candidates, recruiters and hiring managers, and provides a repository to search for relevant applicants, it doesn’t allow you to market to your candidates. A CRM capability allows you to create a private talent pool and automate the nurturing of job candidates. The two tools serve different but interconnected purposes; they complement each other. Today’s active candidate is tomorrow’s passive candidate, and CRM functionality helps you easily deliver the right message, to the right people, at the right time. Here’s how.

REACHING TOP TALENT EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

- **Finding the Right Candidates.** Recruiters now utilize technology (sometimes included within an ATS platform) to go where the talent is. And it’s not just prominent social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube — but also discussion boards, online forums and blogging sites where comments can be as useful as the posts themselves for identifying exceptional talent. Of course, social media and mobile computing go hand in hand with almost all early-career job seekers and passive candidates — and arguably with the majority of mid- and later-career talent as well.
- **Closing the Deal.** Social media can start the engagement process with relevant candidates — but inherent system intelligence is often what gets your desired candidates on board. It’s the results of a sophisticated, adaptive, smart system that helps convince the best talent to consider a certain organization and/or role. It’s the system intelligence, a vital component missing from the first wave of ATS platforms, that guides the employer/recruiter about the best ways to engage with each person on their radar — what messages will resonate and entice the most, across content, style, medium and frequency.
- **Leveraging Technology and Analytics.** Additionally, the screening and interview process can now readily be technology-enabled with video interviews, sometimes built around validated predictive communication patterns. And systems don’t stop delivering value when a hire is made. Analytics can now link job performance and retention back to sourcing channels and screening methods to highlight those that are most effective for different roles.

FINDING THE RIGHT VENDOR

The challenge in finding the right solution is there are so many options that exist in the market — and there are new entrants every day. There are likely at least 15 ATS purveyors with a 1 percent market share or greater, led by such established players as Taleo/Oracle (with perhaps over a 30 percent market share), Brassring (Kenexa, IBM), iCims, Jobvite, ADP, SAP/SuccessFactors, PeopleFluent and Silkroad. Additionally, the landscape includes other relatively mature ATS offerings from PeopleSoft, Ultimate Software, Lumesse and Kronos, plus more recently launched recruiting solutions from HCM powerhouses Cornerstone OnDemand and Workday. Finally, several smaller operators are gaining serious traction, such as Greenhouse, Lever, SmartRecruiters, HireBridge, ATS OnDemand, PCR recruiter and ApplicantPro.

Rounding out the broader solution category are the well-known brands with a heritage in job boards – Monster, CareerBuilder and Dice – and the emerging recruitment marketing sub-category players, such as Avature, Jibe, Broadbean, Findly, Smashfly, Talemetry, etc.

This cluttered and complex recruiting technology market is why it's so important that prospective customers take seriously the typically laborious due diligence process of mapping their most acute talent acquisition pain points and challenges to solution vendors with relevant capabilities — as tangibly demonstrated in product demos.

In short, that means being honest up front about what your organization needs and what you want from your ATS. Narrowing the field to a short list for detailed evaluation should then involve examining factors such as product investment patterns, the efficacy of the vendor's customer success model, pricing, proposed SLA frameworks, and findings from customer reference calls and the sometimes (perilously) overlooked alignment of company cultures.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Take the time and do the work to find the tools and resources that are right for your organization. The impact could be tremendous.

MEET THE EXPERT



Mark Rieder, SVP

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Mark joined NFP in January 2010 to launch the company's national benefits administration practice, which supports more than 100 brokering and consulting offices throughout the U.S. Since then He has expanded the practice area to provide HRIS consulting services through its newly formed HR Services division. Most recently Mark has played an integral role in the development the NFP Marketplace, NFP's exchange solution. Before joining NFP, Mark spent the previous nine of 17 years in the employee benefits industry as CEO of a leading employee benefit consulting firm based in the Philadelphia area. Mark has a bachelor's in finance with an emphasis in economics from The Pennsylvania State University.