



RFP or Not?

Best Practices for Evaluating Recruiting Software Vendors

So, you're ready to invest in new recruiting software.

When it comes to updating your recruiting solution, you're in good company. [More than half](#) of all employers today are investing in some type of standalone recruiting technology as part of their broader strategy to attract, select, and hire top talent.

"Superior talent is up to [8x's more productive](#)," thereby driving huge gains for an organization's bottom line. But in this new era of labor shortages, companies must battle fiercely against one another to acquire the best talent. To win, you need to have the right tools to effectively attract candidates and strategically select the best fit.

“

"Superior talent is up to
8x's more productive."

McKinsey&Company

”

Is RFP the best way to evaluate new technology?

An Request for Proposal (RFP) is a common approach for many organizations to evaluate whether a product meets their needs. While this approach is popular among buyers of recruiting software, RFPs are not executed without challenges and risks.

RFPs require substantial time and resources to review.

The process of preparing a thorough RFP in-house requires a great deal of time and subject-matter expertise. The process can take anywhere from 3 to 6 months to complete and leverage a variety of internal stakeholders - think HR, Recruitment, IT, Finance and in some cases, the Executive team. Finding the time and resources for planning, developing, and launching an effective RFP isn't always feasible or practical in today's business environment. Further, given the speed of innovation and disruption happening in recruiting technology, coupled with the amount of preparation time an RFP requires, an RFP can be often become outdated in its requirements before it is even sent to participating vendors.

A RFP generated from experience with legacy systems won't find you a game changing solution.

Absent time, expertise, and resources to execute an effective RFP, some buyers simply resort to sending out a checklist of “must-haves” compiled from experience with their legacy solution provider. These feature-driven checklists often fail to reflect current technology requirements and strategic recruiting elements today’s companies need to effectively compete for talent (e.g., artificial intelligence, recruitment marketing, social networking capabilities, etc.). Worse, many of these “must-have” checklists fail to address organizations’ actual recruiting challenges, rendering the impending purchase ineffective before it is even implemented.

RFPs don't tell you about critical factors that are not features.

Finally, feature-heavy RFP checklists tend to lack a holistic approach for evaluating recruiting technology, often disqualifying vendors who can actually solve today’s recruiting challenges. The check-the-box approach fails to assess critical non-features like a vendor’s services and industry expertise. Factors such as whether a vendor will be a reliable and responsive partner, the quality of support they provide, their knowledge of industry trends, in addition to their ability to innovate, are critical considerations buyers should assess when investing in new recruiting technology. Failure to do so leaves buyers vulnerable to unexpected costs or unforeseen delays, ultimately impairing an organization’s talent acquisition strategy.



Adopt a modern discovery methodology.

RFPs require extensive resources, ask for outdated functionalities, and fail to evaluate non-feature factors. Why not skip the RFP and invest your time and effort productively by engaging in the right conversations with vendors directly? Evaluating and selecting the right solution can be challenging. We will guide you through the three main steps in executing your modern recruiting technology discovery strategy:

Step 1

A RFP generated from experience with legacy systems won't find you a game changing solution.

Having a deep understanding of your recruiting challenges provides the foundation for selecting the right system. Start by mapping out your hiring process in its current state - including the tools used, relevant stakeholders, workflows, and performances. Once your process is mapped, identify where your challenges exist. This map of your current hiring ecosystem will serve as a foundation for pointed, productive conversations with vendors in Step 2.

Use the following checklist to examine and discuss important factors with your stakeholders:

- 1 What objectives are you trying to meet?
- 2 What tasks do you expect to accomplish using a new recruiting technology?
- 3 Who are the relevant stakeholders in your organization?
- 4 What are the organization's core hiring struggles?
- 5 What recruiting KPI metrics do you plan to improve with the new solution?
- 6 What level of vendor support is needed?
- 7 What existing systems does the new recruiting technology need to integrate with?
- 8 What is your budget?
- 9 Are there specific security, compliance or privacy challenges that should be addressed with the new recruiting technology?

Step 2

Conduct Primary & Secondary Vendor Assessment

Vendor websites can give you a fundamental understanding of their products.

Independent software review sites like [TrustRadius](#) and [Capterra](#) provide you with valuable user reviews and product comparisons. If you want more in-depth insights on industry leaders, analyst reports such as [IDC MarketScape Modern TAS Vendor Assessment](#) can be a great resource. You should be able to shortlist a few vendors that are well received among your peers.

Now you are ready to reach out to the selected vendors. You can share your map from Step 1 and have the vendor walk you through how their product can solve your specific challenges and integrate with your current process. You can involve relevant stakeholders at different stages of your conversations with vendors.

Use the following checklist to evaluate potential vendors:

- ✓ 1 Is it an all-in-one Talent Acquisition Suite?
- ✓ 2 Does the product address your most challenging use cases?
- ✓ 3 Do hiring managers and recruiters find the product intuitive to use?
- ✓ 4 Will candidates enjoy applying through the platform?
- ✓ 5 Is your IT department on board with the new solution?
- ✓ 6 Can the vendor integrate with a wide selection of tools valuable to your hiring process?
- ✓ 7 Is the product configurable to fit your hiring processes?
- ✓ 8 Can you access the product on mobile?
- ✓ 9 Does the vendor provide services to help you deploy or transition from your previous system?
- ✓ 10 What is the level of customer support available in the future?
- ✓ 11 Is pricing and packaging clear?

Step 3

Select the Best Fit

After talking through recruiting challenges with vendors, trying out a product sandbox, and speaking with the vendor's different teams, you should have a few finalists. As part of your final review of vendors, you need to identify the best fit for your organization. "Vendor fit" speaks to whether the vendor truly understands your company brand and your talent acquisition goals. Contracts for recruiting solutions often last for multiple years so it's important to select a vendor that you enjoy working with.

In assessing vendor fit, here are a few things to consider:

- ✓ 1 Do the vendor's top value propositions align with your goals?
- ✓ 2 Does the vendor demonstrate industry thought leadership and take action to stay ahead?
- ✓ 3 Will your future engagement with the vendor become a mutually beneficial partnership?
- ✓ 4 Does the product have the potential to grow with your company?
- ✓ 5 Does the vendor provide opportunities to gain best practices from industry peers?
- ✓ 6 Has the vendor provided you with references from organizations facing similar challenges as you?

Ultimately, the recruiting software buying process should be a problem-solving exercise. The most fitting solution is one that addresses your team's hiring goals and challenges, provided by the most reliable vendor that matches your culture. And remember, you don't have to have all the answers - let recruiting software vendors be your co-pilot in the journey to hiring success.

3-STEP GUIDE

to recruiting software vendor assessment

Feel free to use this guide as a worksheet throughout your recruiting software buying process.

1. Map out recruiting challenges from all angles

Hiring Objectives + KPIs	Stakeholders	Software + Tools	Challenges	Integrations + Compliance
(e.g. Increase quality of hire)	(e.g. HRIT)	(e.g. Excel)	(e.g. Hiring managers slow to respond)	(e.g. Workday)

2. Conduct primary & secondary vendor assessment

	Functionality Strength	Stakeholder Buy-in	Integration Flexibility	Support Quality	Price-to-Value
Option A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Select the best fit

Value Propositions Alignment	Industry Thought Leadership	Partnership	Community	Scalability

What if my company still requires an RFP?

We get it - sometimes there is no way of getting around an RFP.

While a conversational discovery process is strongly encouraged, we do offer resources to help in the preparation of an RFP where required.

We're happy to help you get started on the path to hiring success!

Contact us: sales@smartrecruiters.com



As a global leader in enterprise recruiting software, SmartRecruiters offers a cloud-based Talent Acquisition Suite that allows businesses to attract, select, and hire the best people. More than 4,000 companies worldwide rely on SmartRecruiters to drive hiring success, including brands like Avery Dennison, Bosch, LinkedIn, Skechers, and Visa. For more information on how we connect people to jobs at scale, follow us at @SmartRecruiters, on LinkedIn or our website.

For more information, follow us at @SmartRecruiters, on LinkedIn or visit us at smartrecruiters.com.

The content provided here within is SmartRecruiters understanding of applicable legislation as of September 2017. Each customer is recommended to consult with their in-house compliance and legal officer to validate and verify the law as it relates to recruiting and employment practices.