



Future-Proof Recruitment

Strategies for talent leaders



Retool your hiring strategy for the future

The talent landscape is shifting faster than ever, with both employers and workers struggling to adapt. Employers are hard-pressed to find the right talent, job seekers are frustrated with convoluted recruitment processes, and employees are demanding more from their workplaces. This guide offers talent leaders actionable strategies to address the challenges on multiple fronts:

- Bridging “The Great Disconnect” between job seekers and employers
- Breaking down barriers to unlock the potential of your workforce
- Fostering wellbeing at work to attract and retain top talent
- Hiring for the skills of the future to drive long-term success

We'll start by exploring the gaps between what companies offer and what candidates expect, highlighting ways to realign hiring practices for better engagement. Then we'll examine how embracing inclusion can boost recruitment and contribute to work wellbeing alongside efforts to improve compensation and flexibility. Finally, we'll turn our focus on the growing need to close skills gaps and develop the workforce of the future.

In a competitive talent market, the organizations that adapt will thrive. This guide provides the insights and strategies you need to future-proof your recruitment approach—helping you not only attract the best talent but also create an environment where people can grow and succeed.



Bridging “The Great Disconnect” between job seekers and employers



The gap between job seeker and employer expectations

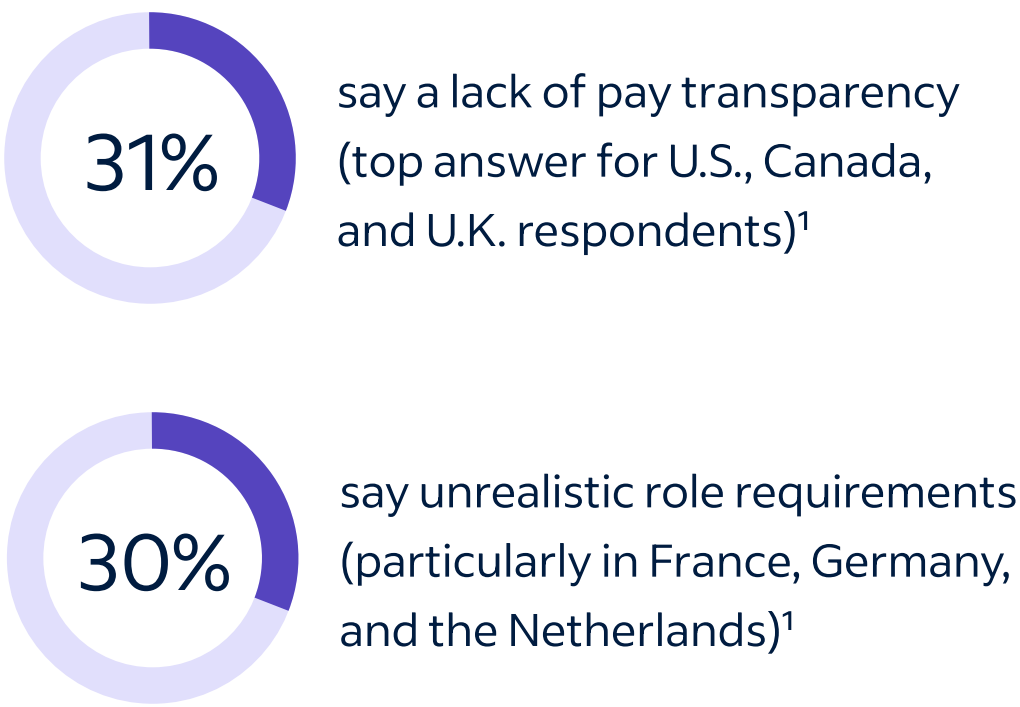
There’s a blame game going on in the world of work. New research emphasizes that both talent leaders and job seekers agree hiring is getting harder, but the reason is up for debate. Employers say there’s a shortage of quality applicants, but workers say the roles are what’s lacking. Neither side seems to be meeting the needs of the other in what Indeed is dubbing “The Great Disconnect.” Where exactly is it all going wrong?

What’s the biggest challenge for hiring managers in finding quality candidates?



It comes down to missed connections. The majority of employers and candidates surveyed say that a fair amount of open roles or applicants they see just aren’t relevant.

What’s the biggest challenge job seekers face in finding quality roles?



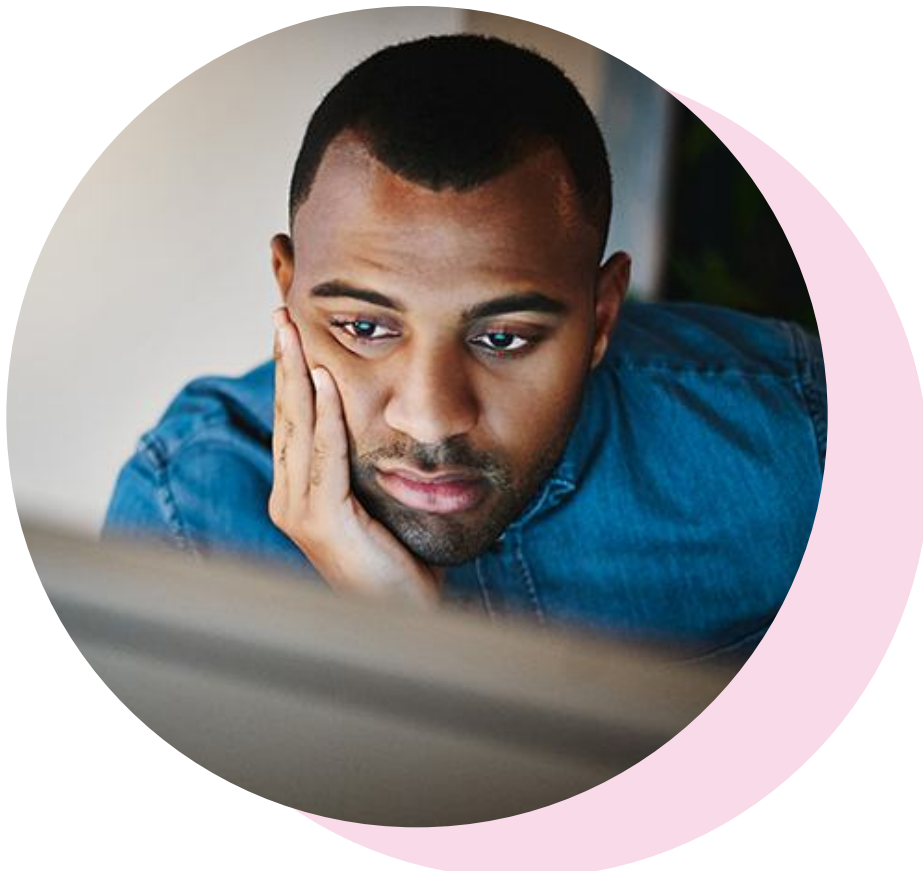
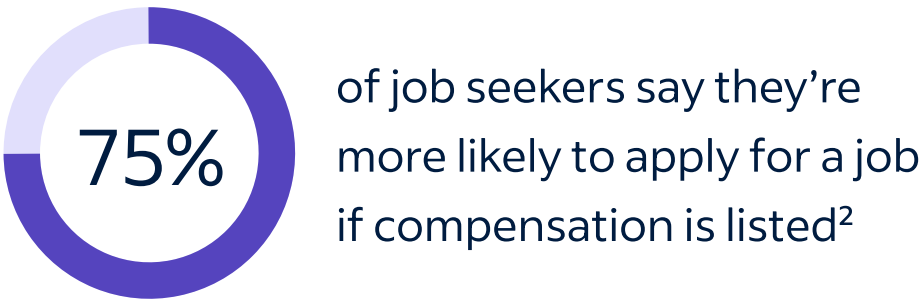
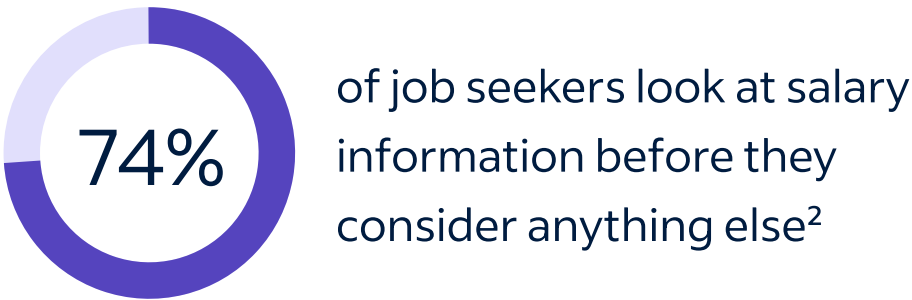
Workers won’t sacrifice flexibility

Workers consistently express a desire for flexibility in where, when, and how they work. A lack of hybrid or remote work options was a dealbreaker for a fifth of workers, and more than half of respondents said it was at least something they would “really appreciate” having.² Meanwhile, many employers issued return-to-office mandates over the last year and office occupancy rates have gone up.



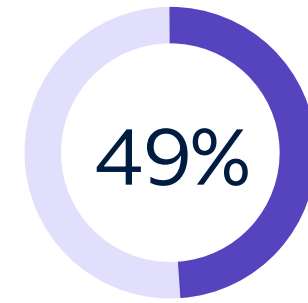
Pay transparency can be a dealbreaker

Not seeing a salary range was the biggest reason job seekers discarded an application, according to recent Indeed research. And a majority of job seekers look for salary information first.¹



The hiring process is too complex

Recruiters often want the hiring process to be thorough so they don't waste time on candidates that ultimately aren't a good fit. While it's understandable, they risk creating a daunting interview process that drives away quality candidates.

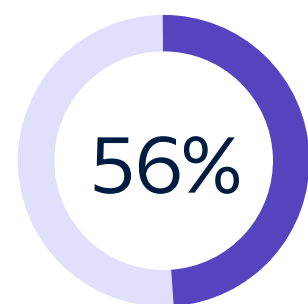


of job seekers say most job application processes are too long and complicated²

Solving the disconnect with skills

A skills-first hiring approach has the potential to broaden talent pools to help connect recruiters to more candidates. Certainly, job seekers want to see skills-based hiring and development. However, employers are unevenly adopting and promoting the practices.

Even where they embrace skills-first hiring, employers report being hampered by limited time and resources. One of the most striking insights is the confusion over what a skills-first strategy entails.



of employers say the greatest barrier to skills-first hiring is understanding how to implement it¹



Strategies for employers to close the gap

- 1 Offer hybrid work if you can**
Remote or hybrid work obviously isn't possible for every industry or role. Providing flexibility in other ways can help, for example, by offering sabbaticals or phased retirements.
- 2 Be transparent during the hiring journey**
Not only should candidates represent themselves truthfully and authentically, but companies should as well. Listing the pay, or at least disclosing it early in the hiring process, is one way to show a commitment to transparency.
- 3 Communicate quickly—and smartly**
To avoid missing out on great candidates, schedule interviews quickly and follow up quickly. Keep generational differences in mind too. Communicate with candidates in the way they prefer, whether it's texting, email, or something else.
- 4 Take a skills-first hiring approach**
Connect with more qualified candidates by rethinking your role requirements. Start by removing degree and years of experience requirements in your job postings, then evaluate candidates based on their skills and non-degree training.
- 5 Invest in employer branding to attract the right people**
Your employer brand tells potential job seekers what it's like to work at your company—and why someone would want to. Share your company's story on your careers page, company blog, and social media profiles. Also, stay aware of the ratings and comments you're getting on employer review sites.

Sources

¹ Indeed Survey with YouGov 2024, Total N=5,650 job seekers and 3,651 employers

² Indeed 2024 Workforce Insights Report



Breaking down barriers
to unlock the potential
of your workforce



Embracing inclusion as a talent strategy

Inclusion isn't just about doing what's right—it's about unlocking the full potential of a workforce. When companies remove barriers for women, ensure accessibility for professionals with disabilities, and support employees of all ages, they don't just create a better culture. They gain a competitive edge. Yet too often, experienced workers face bias that sidelines their contributions despite the immense value they bring. Organizations that embrace inclusion as a talent strategy attract top performers, drive innovation, and build teams with the depth of experience needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

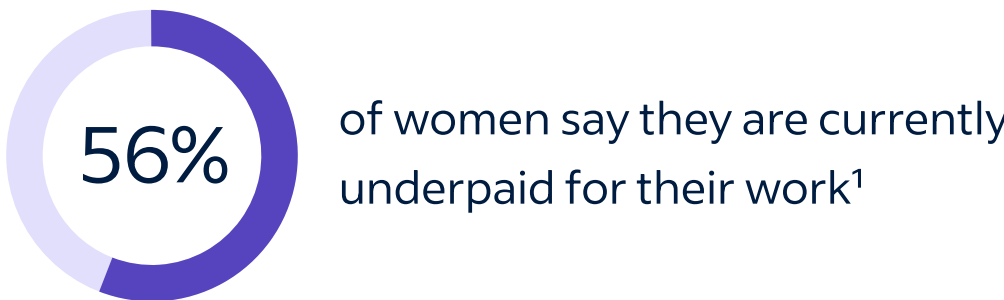


Supporting and promoting women at work

Despite economic and cultural differences, women around the world experience similar workplace challenges. In a global survey across 11 countries, Indeed found that most working women agree that pay, work-life balance, job security, and company culture are the most important factors in a job. The study also revealed the tremendous work needed to achieve gender parity across compensation, career progression, and wellbeing.

Strategies for improving the working lives of women

- 1 **Provide fair compensation and pay transparency**
Women have a firm grasp on the value of their work and want fair compensation. However, the majority of women experience a disparity in pay.

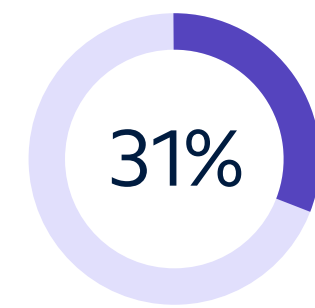


As an employer, consider disclosing pay structures within your organization and include salary or salary ranges on job postings. Employers globally are responding to the trend to help reduce discrepancies in pay. In fact, 86% of new jobs posted directly on Indeed provide salary information.²

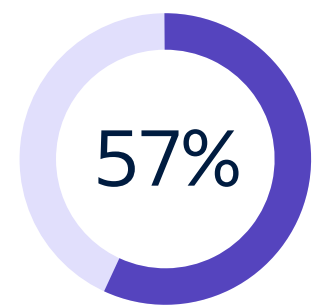


2 Give opportunities for career progression

Promotions are an important element of career progression, yet less than one-third of women are satisfied with the promotion prospects in their current role.



of women are dissatisfied with their promotion prospects¹



of women agree training and development opportunities are important when looking for a job¹

Employers should implement a structured strategy through active career planning and development and be clear about what employees need to advance to the next level or a new role that meets their professional goals. Employers may even consider offering stretch or lateral roles, where women can fill in for a position outside of their skill set. These tactics are great for retention and talent management and allow women to progress in their careers quickly in a non-linear way.

3 Support mental health and wellbeing

A healthy workplace is one in which employees and their leaders actively work together to create an environment that promotes and protects the health, safety, and wellbeing of all employees. Employers might consider implementing clear health and safety guidelines, creating employee assistance programs, providing mental health training, and making mental health resources more accessible for women.

4 Create a sense of belonging

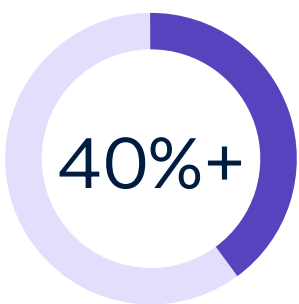
When asked what employers are doing to create a welcoming work environment for women, an unwaveringly high proportion of women cite “None of the above” (40%).¹ This signals an opportunity for employers to consider implementing some of the following strategies and programs to help employees feel heard, respected, and included:

-  Create a women’s task force
-  Provide training on unconscious biases
-  Provide mentorship and allyship programs
-  Launch an inspirational speaker series

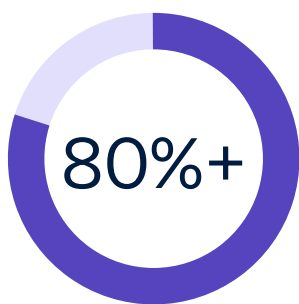


Making work accessible for all

Barriers and biases often exclude people with disabilities from the workforce. Many children with disabilities face unmet needs in school and may even be discouraged from pursuing higher education. As a result, they often enter adulthood with valuable skills but without a college degree, leading to exclusion from hiring processes that overly rely on educational credentials. This explains the substantially lower rates of employment for people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities across the world.



difference in employment between people with and without disabilities in the US³



of people with disabilities are unemployed in developing countries⁴

Strategies for disability inclusion in the workplace

- 1 Normalize disability inclusion**
To help facilitate more respectful interactions with coworkers with disabilities, consider providing general knowledge and inclusive etiquette training to all employees. You can also elevate your Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) so they have a voice in the business and can lead cultural adoptions that will drive long-term change.
- 2 Adopt skills-first hiring practices**
If you haven't yet, consider pivoting to a skills-first hiring approach. Prioritizing the skills and experiences that candidates bring to the table will enable you to move beyond biases related to educational backgrounds or perceived capabilities and focus on the value these individuals contribute.

- 3 Integrate AI-driven technology**
Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly important for employers aiming to create a more inclusive workplace. AI-driven technologies such as Apple's Personal Voice, Microsoft's Copilot, and Be My Eyes' Be My AI are advancing workplace accessibility and integrating assistive technology into everyday operations.
- 4 Offer universal accommodations**
Making accommodations a standard part of your workplace infrastructure eases the pressure on individuals to disclose disabilities. Universal accommodations like captioned video meetings, meeting-free periods, mandatory agendas, noise-canceling headphones, and voice-to-text technologies provide essential support to all employees as their needs evolve.
- 5 Provide accessible upskilling opportunities**
Flexible learning options, including online courses and self-paced modules, allow employees to upskill at their own pace and according to their schedules. By catering to various learning styles and needs within your organization you can widen the impact and benefits of your training programs.
- 6 Ensure all voices are heard in leadership**
Creating opportunities for employees with disabilities to participate in key conversations—from management to development and product ideation—helps ensure diverse lived experiences are represented and addressed. Employers can support this by fostering mentorship and upskilling programs that help remove barriers and empower all employees to pursue leadership roles.

“It's crucial to make space for flexibility and innovation, allowing disabled people and their nondisabled colleagues to truly thrive in their work.”

Keely Cat-Wells
Founder and CEO, Making Space

Embracing a multigenerational workforce

Age-diverse organizations can gain a competitive advantage through improved employee loyalty and wellbeing, and by harnessing the rich institutional knowledge and diverse viewpoints of a multigenerational workforce. That's why preventing age discrimination in the workplace is well worth the effort.

Strategies to prevent age discrimination at work

- 1 Re-word job postings**
Job posting phrasing may unintentionally bias searches toward a specific age group. Review and revise job postings that use terms like “fresh talent” or “digital native,” which can unfairly dictate applicant age.
- 2 Create an inclusive interview process**
To create an inclusive hiring process, look for skills rather than years of experience. Also, try to avoid screening out candidates due to age-based assumptions. For example, an older applicant may be interested in a more junior position when considering a career change. In comparison, a younger applicant may have the skills to excel in a senior role.
- 3 Promote continuous learning and career development**
Develop programs that encourage learning and skills development, supporting career growth while making each generation part of an engaged, future-proof workforce.

- 4 Encourage cross-generational learning**
Create opportunities for employees of different ages to work together and learn from each other through mentorship programs, cross-generational teams or employee-led, age-focused initiatives, such as an Inclusion Business Resource Group (IBRG).



Sources

1 Indeed Survey: *Beyond Empowerment: Promoting Women for Better Work*
2 Indeed Data, Worldwide

3 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
4 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

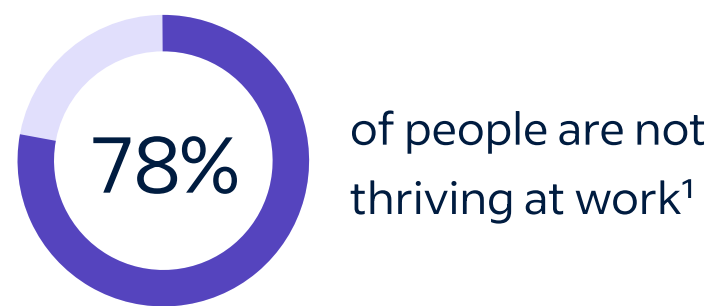
Fostering wellbeing at work to attract and retain top talent



Wellbeing is an important performance driver

Indeed has a long and abiding interest in work wellbeing as part of our commitment to creating better work for all. In fact, our dataset on work wellbeing—spanning 19 countries, with over 250 million data points collected—is the largest in the world.¹

The 2024 edition of our Global Work Wellbeing Report revealed that work wellbeing hasn't recovered from the pandemic and has continued to decline over the past four years. A striking majority of respondents reported they were not thriving at work, revealing widespread struggles across all four work wellbeing indicators of happiness, purpose, satisfaction, and, in particular, stress.



While many may assume that pay and flexibility are the top drivers of work wellbeing, employee surveys tell a different story. Belonging, inclusion, and feeling energized are the three biggest drivers, with belonging ranking at the top.¹



Belonging means being treated like a human. Bringing your whole self to the workplace and having valuable social relations—and, who knows, even making friends at work.”

Jan-Emmanuel De Neve
Professor of Economics & Director of the Wellbeing Research Centre,
University of Oxford

Wellbeing offers benefits to business

An Indeed-sponsored report from Harvard Business Review Analytics Services found that companies almost universally agree happy workers provide a competitive advantage and make it easier to retain talent.² And in a simulated portfolio of the top 100 publicly traded companies on Indeed, those with high Work Wellbeing Scores outperformed stock market benchmarks.¹ These conclusions confirm what we’ve long believed at Indeed: investing in work wellbeing confers benefits to business in important ways.

Productivity boost

A study of British telecom call centers found that happy employees made more calls per hour and booked 12% more in sales. The correlation was particularly powerful for tasks that require social and emotional intelligence, such as dealing with a disgruntled customer or trying to sell a more complex product.

Talent attraction

In an MIT study that tested how Indeed’s Workplace Wellbeing scores impact job search behavior, job seekers were 80% more likely to apply to companies with high wellbeing scores. Likewise, employers that climb up the list also receive more applicants.

Employee retention

Research shows that companies with high Indeed Workplace Wellbeing scores have lower turnover, while those with low scores experience higher turnover.¹ For example, H&R Block increased its retention rates from 89% to 93% over the past few years. Employee surveys indicate that this is due, in part, to its benefits, which include giving employees a full “reboot week” off.

Strategies to improve work wellbeing for talent attraction

A company's demonstrated commitments to work wellbeing can make a real difference to their recruitment and hiring process. Set your talent leaders up for success with concerted efforts to support wellbeing in the three key areas of compensation, flexibility, and inclusion and belonging.

Compensation

Employee compensation reflects an organization's commitment to work wellbeing. Fairly compensated employees are more satisfied with their jobs, loyal to their organizations, and better able to support their families.

- 1 Transparency**
Be transparent about pay and be open to giving raises to narrow inequalities.
- 2 Negotiation**
Give employees opportunities to renegotiate pay and outline the process for negotiations.
- 3 Fair pay**
Pay a living wage at minimum as this can improve health and reduce symptoms of mental illness.
- 4 Profit sharing**
Share profits with employees, for example, through stock options or bonuses.
- 5 Group incentives**
Implement group incentive pay to foster greater information sharing, trust in management, and a more positive work culture.

Flexibility

Granting employees more freedom over where and when they work can improve their wellbeing and productivity. Flexibility can also be offered through periods of leave for personal or professional reasons, promoting rejuvenation and inspiration.

- 1 Remote work**
Give employees the option to work from home and provide them with equipment like headphones and keyboards to foster an environment of comfort and productivity.
- 2 Autonomy**
Let employees have autonomy over their schedule to reduce stress and improve work-life balance.
- 3 Time off**
Recharge employees with the option to take leave or offer sabbaticals and deferred compensation.
- 4 Parental leave**
Encourage employees to take any available paid parental leave and establish mechanisms to mitigate negative career consequences resulting from missed opportunities.



Inclusion & Belonging

Belonging happens when people feel accepted and supported as their true, authentic selves.

1 Inclusion
Promote inclusivity—diverse teams with an inclusive culture not only support employee wellbeing, but can boost business performance through innovation and leadership.

2 Bias reduction
Remove words associated with gender stereotypes from job descriptions, anonymize applicants to overcome stereotyping, and test applicants in the later stages of the hiring process.

3 Representation
Improve senior-level representation through mentoring and sponsorship, especially for underrepresented employee groups.



Sources
1 Indeed Global Work Wellbeing Report 2024, analyzed by the University of Oxford Wellbeing Research Centre with Dr. Jan-Emmanuel De Neve and Dr. George Ward
2 Indeed Report: *Tapping Into Today's Tech Talent*, 2024



Hiring for the skills of
the future to drive
long-term success

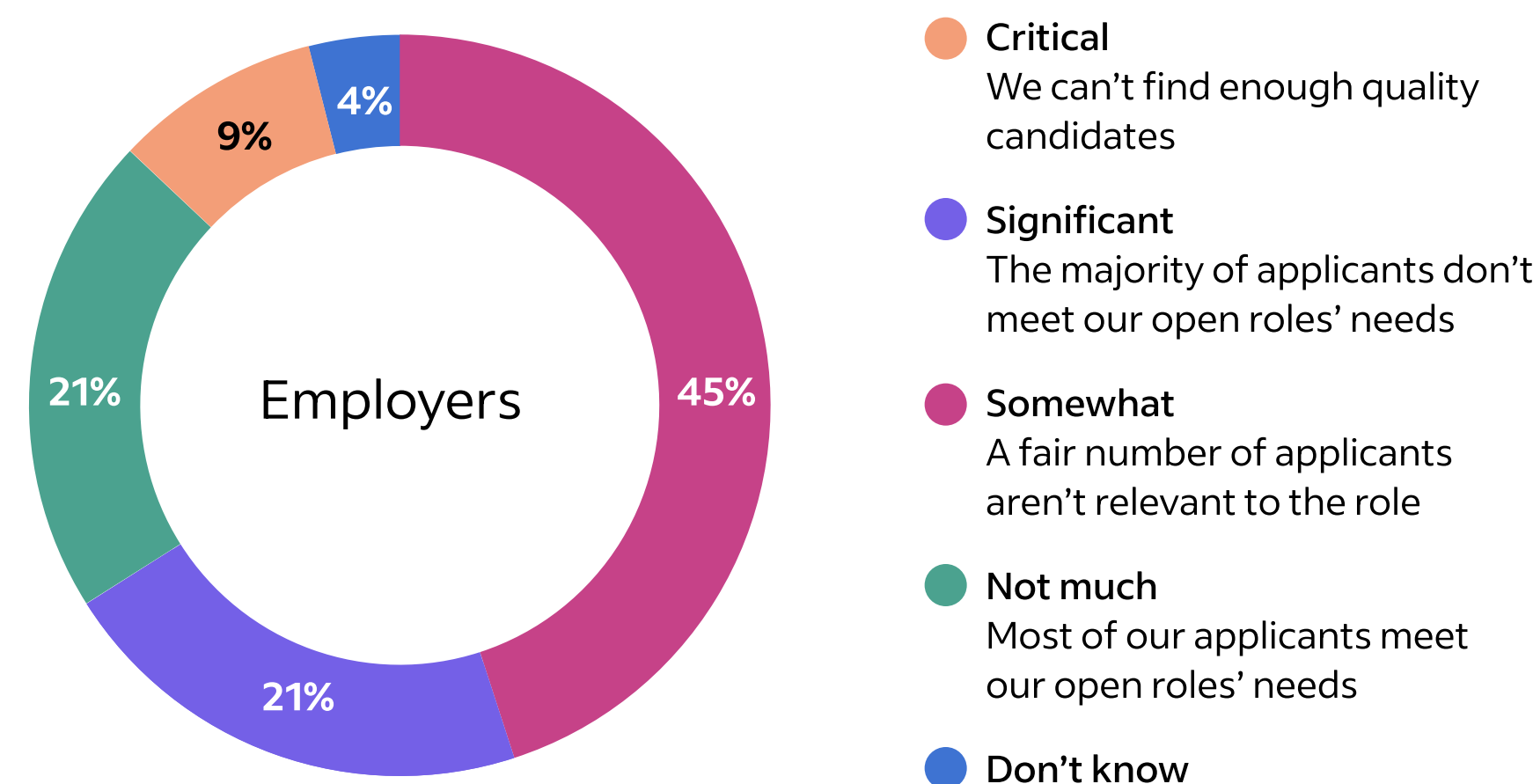


The challenge of hiring for skills

Job seekers believe the main reason they miss out on roles is that they’re in competition with an overwhelming number of qualified candidates for an underwhelming selection of jobs. So, instead of being selective and intentional about the roles they apply for, many job seekers cast a wide net. However, in applying to a large number of jobs indiscriminately, they’re often applying for jobs that don’t fit their skills and experience, or in many cases, not tailoring their resumes and cover letters with key qualifications to help them stand out.

Employers report that they’re scrutinizing applications, searching for quality candidates. According to Indeed research, “employers consider a candidate’s availability, location, and responsiveness in their quality assessment of the ‘total package.’” When these elements are lacking, employers perceive a lack of quality applicants, but the problem may simply be that qualified job seekers are sending low-quality applications.¹

Is a lack of quality candidates an issue for your organization? If so, how?²

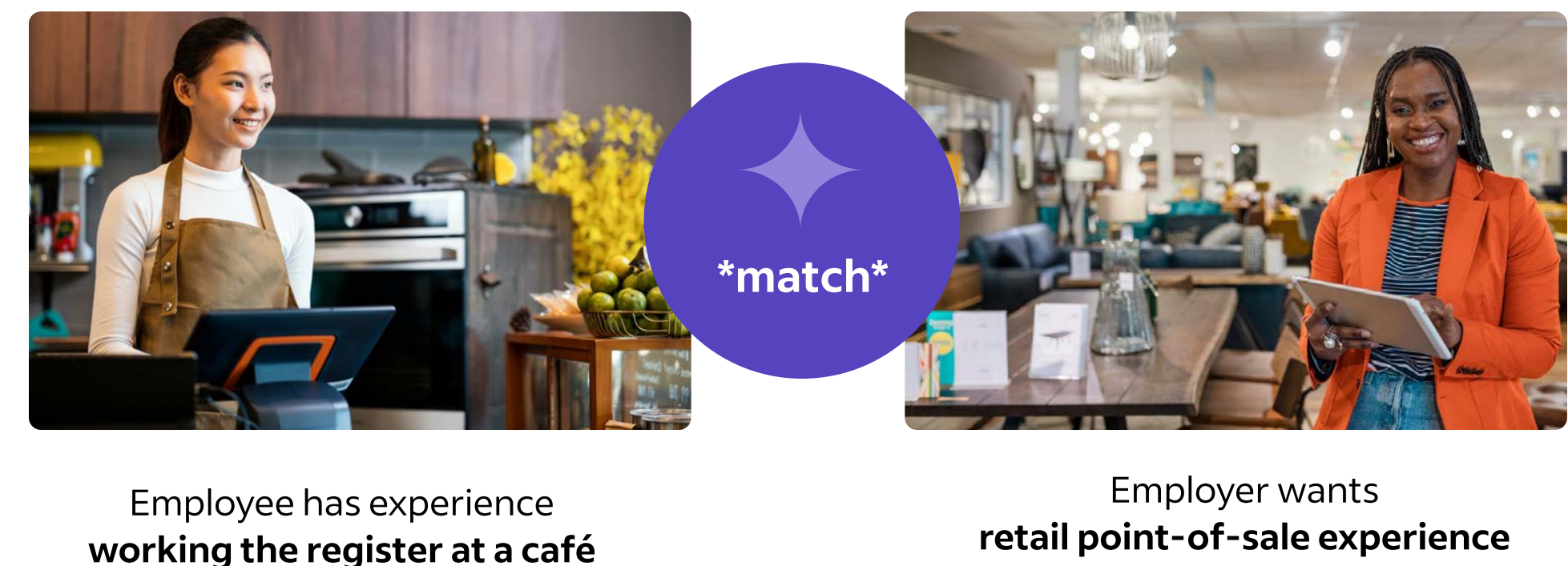


How AI is reshaping hiring

AI is changing the hiring landscape for both job seekers and employers. For job seekers, the introduction of AI in the workplace means that the skills they need for future roles are currently being rewritten—so no one has them all yet.

As it stands today, generative AI is best suited to applying its skills to help with relatively straightforward work tasks that require only modest problem-solving and no hands-on execution. For jobs that require significant hands-on skills (for example, aviation or cooking), the usefulness of GenAI will remain limited. Knowledge workers' roles, or those that can be done remotely, are potentially the most exposed to change from generative AI, emphasizing the importance of continued upskilling and ongoing learning.

For employers, AI technology can now help hiring managers find qualified talent more easily and quickly by helping to curate great job postings and sorting for skills before other qualifications. For example, in the past, applicants would have to include the exact language used in a job description to be recognized as a potential match. With the help of AI, employers can identify whether a candidate has the right skills more quickly and effortlessly.



Strategies for filling roles and skills gaps

1 Focus on adjacent skills and internal candidates

In a tight labor market, it can help to focus on sourcing within your existing employee base. Think beyond direct experience to consider the skills adjacency of your current staff—the skills they may possess that are closely related to the skills you seek for a specific role. For example, customer service professionals may be suitable for roles in sales or account management.

“

I think a lot about skills adjacency and internal mobility. Many employers are focusing on proactively sourcing within their own employee base. That can help provide marginalized folks with an opportunity they may not have considered and can ensure they're part of the internal career cycle.”

Wendy Wick

Senior Vice President, PeopleReady

2 Rethink how you talk about roles

In the spirit of broadening your talent pool, look at the language you're using in job descriptions. Remove jargon and check for bias. If you're looking to attract folks who typically haven't had the opportunity to be in these types of roles, make sure the verbiage is understandable.

3 Change up where jobs are posted

It's also important to consider where jobs are being posted. If you're always fishing in the same pond, you'll get the same fish. Programmatic advertising can be great for helping diversify candidate sources.

4 Remove unnecessary requirements

A key step in a skills-first hiring strategy is removing unnecessary degree requirements or reducing years of experience requirements. This opens doors to candidates who may otherwise be overlooked for valuable opportunities to kick-start their careers. But to do this effectively, companies must clearly define the necessary skills for each role.

5 Identify required skills

Consider creating a list of skills required for every role in your company. This will help identify whether a degree is necessary for a role and write job descriptions that accurately reflect the capabilities needed for success. More importantly, it levels the playing field for candidates, internal or external, who don't have degrees or traditional experience.

6 Create a digital framework

Once skills have been identified, investing in a digital framework is required to put them to use—for example, creating digital profiles of every employee tagged with their specific skills. In this scenario, there's also great potential for a digital framework to support upskilling strategies. If you attach skills to projects or training courses, then employees who've completed those projects or courses could claim those skills as part of their employee profile.



7 Change your organization's mindset

When HR leaders remove degree requirements for roles, they may find it takes some added work to explain that the change wasn't about hiring less-skilled workers, but removing obstacles to attract a more diverse range of employees. A successful skills-first hiring strategy requires a shift in an organization's overall mindset and culture to influence individual behaviors and attitudes at every level.



Pro tip: Start by educating hiring managers and deploying resources on the ground to set up both managers and new hires for success. Add mentorship and job shadowing programs, employee resource groups (ERGs), or other supports as needed.

8 Build your own talent pipeline

Setting up apprenticeship programs can help companies reach high-potential workers as part of your skills-first hiring strategy. Apprenticeship models in fields like manufacturing and skilled trades have a history of successfully attracting and retaining diverse talent, but these can be adapted even to a corporate setting.



Pro tip: Create partnerships with educational institutions like colleges and universities, as well as nonprofits and workforce organizations, to bring people into your apprenticeship program.

9 Measure success and hold leaders accountable

To evaluate the success of your programs, establish metrics and track them. For example, measure completion and conversion rates for apprentices hired on as employees. Track new hires as well as retention rates, career progression, and promotions.

10 Start small and be focused

These changes can feel overwhelming, and if you attempt to address them all at once, you may feel defeated. Instead, divide the workload by job categories or high-volume roles and focus on one segment at a time. The sooner you get started, the more you will understand and value what the market brings and how you can better engage external populations and internal employees.



Sources

1 Indeed Internal Data, Application Quality, July 2024

2 Indeed Survey with YouGov 2024, Total N=5,650 job seekers and 3,651 employers

Toward a better future of work

As the hiring landscape continues to change, now is the time to rethink your recruitment strategy. Organizations that embrace new approaches, prioritize people, and invest in continuous growth will not only improve hiring outcomes, but also drive long-term business success.

By closing the gap between candidate expectations and hiring practices, removing unnecessary barriers, fostering employee wellbeing, and addressing skills gaps, companies can build a workforce prepared for the challenges ahead.

The future of work belongs to organizations that are willing to evolve. Indeed is here to support you with insights and strategies to navigate changes with confidence. Together, we can take meaningful steps toward a world of better hiring, better work, and better lives.

“

When you look at the challenges that employers are facing—not finding quality talent, hiring taking too long, troubles with retention, difficulty diversifying their workforce—skills-first hiring can help them address those challenges today and in the future.”

Liz Voigt

Senior Manager of Social Impact, Indeed



The information in this document is provided as a courtesy and for informational purposes only. Indeed is not a legal advisor.

This document is subject to copyright owned by Indeed, Inc. Any use, alteration, reproduction, retransmissions, republication, in whole or in part, of all or part of the present document without Indeed's written consent is expressly prohibited. Indeed disclaims any liability from the use or application of the information contained herein or from the interpretations thereof. Copyright © 2025 Indeed, Inc. All rights reserved.

