

# Talent Acquisition in 2025

*Candidate-first trends shaping recruitment*







## From the CEO

In just the past five years, the global workforce has significantly evolved. From navigating a pandemic and adapting to AI advancements to addressing global skills gaps and economic challenges, today's recruitment landscape is more complex than ever. Social movements have highlighted systematic biases, while shifting workforce expectations and technological leaps call for hiring practices that are more agile, inclusive, and adaptive.

The goal of this report is to help talent acquisition (TA) leaders and HR professionals prepare for a complex yet potentially rewarding future. To support this journey, we've identified key recruitment trends topping agendas for HR and recruitment teams in 2025.

Throughout the report, one common thread stands out: the candidate experience. All the trends, some way or another, will affect how the industry develops but also the candidate experience.

## Why we must get the candidate experience right

For too long, candidates have not been seen as key stakeholders or power holders in the recruitment process. This is changing as companies realize that a poor candidate experience can drive top talent to competitors who actively court them.

To deliver an outstanding candidate experience, leaders must dig deeper to understand what candidates actually want and expect from a hiring process and a workplace. Today's job seekers long for meaning in what they do and search for purpose-driven organizations that build a culture around their people. Candidates want to feel valued, respected and included in the workplace. And in the age of instant gratification and advanced technology, candidates expect personalized, frictionless journeys when exploring career opportunities—much like customers do when shopping.

As we prepare for the future, finding and retaining the right talent has never been more crucial. Leaders must prioritize the candidate experience while identifying individuals who will drive long-term growth and resilience, all within the constraints of a lean cost structure. This requires readiness to innovate, embrace change, and, at times, take risks.

Recruitment may be unpredictable, but what the market is consistently signaling is that people remain our greatest asset. By elevating the candidate experience, we not only build stronger teams but also ensure our organizations are prepared for whatever the future brings.

[Aref Abedi](#)  
CEO, Jobylon



## STATE OF CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

# All roads point to the candidate experience

In an era where [60% of job seekers abandon an application](#) due to lengthy, cumbersome experiences, TA teams are increasingly focused on streamlining processes to keep candidates engaged. More and more companies are investing in [technology to track and measure their candidate experience](#) and using the data to tweak their recruitment processes. The goal should be to treat candidates like customers, ensuring they leave as brand advocates even if they don't land the job. Companies that fail to take this into account risk missing out on top talent.

## Measuring candidate experience

Candidate Net Promoter Score (cNPS) is widely considered the gold standard for measuring candidate experience. However, there are many metrics that should be used to gauge how candidates engage with your company and hiring processes.

Since 2016, we've collected data from more than 2 million candidates to calculate a cNPS distribution for both Rejected and Hired candidates. A high cNPS score 

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Very few organizations are gathering feedback on candidate experience. But for those that do, their cNPS has consistently improved since they started measuring. As the saying goes, “you can't improve what you don't measure.”

My top tip? Apply anonymously to a job at your own company to see how the process really works. You might think your process is flawless, but going through it yourself could uncover hidden areas for improvement.



[Simon Werner-Zankl](#)

Founder, Trustcruit

1 in 4

rejected candidates would not apply to the company again

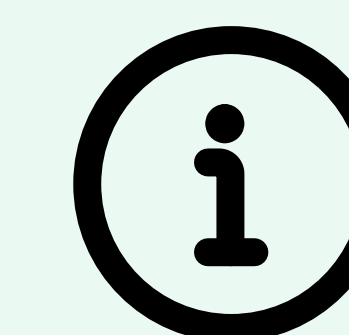
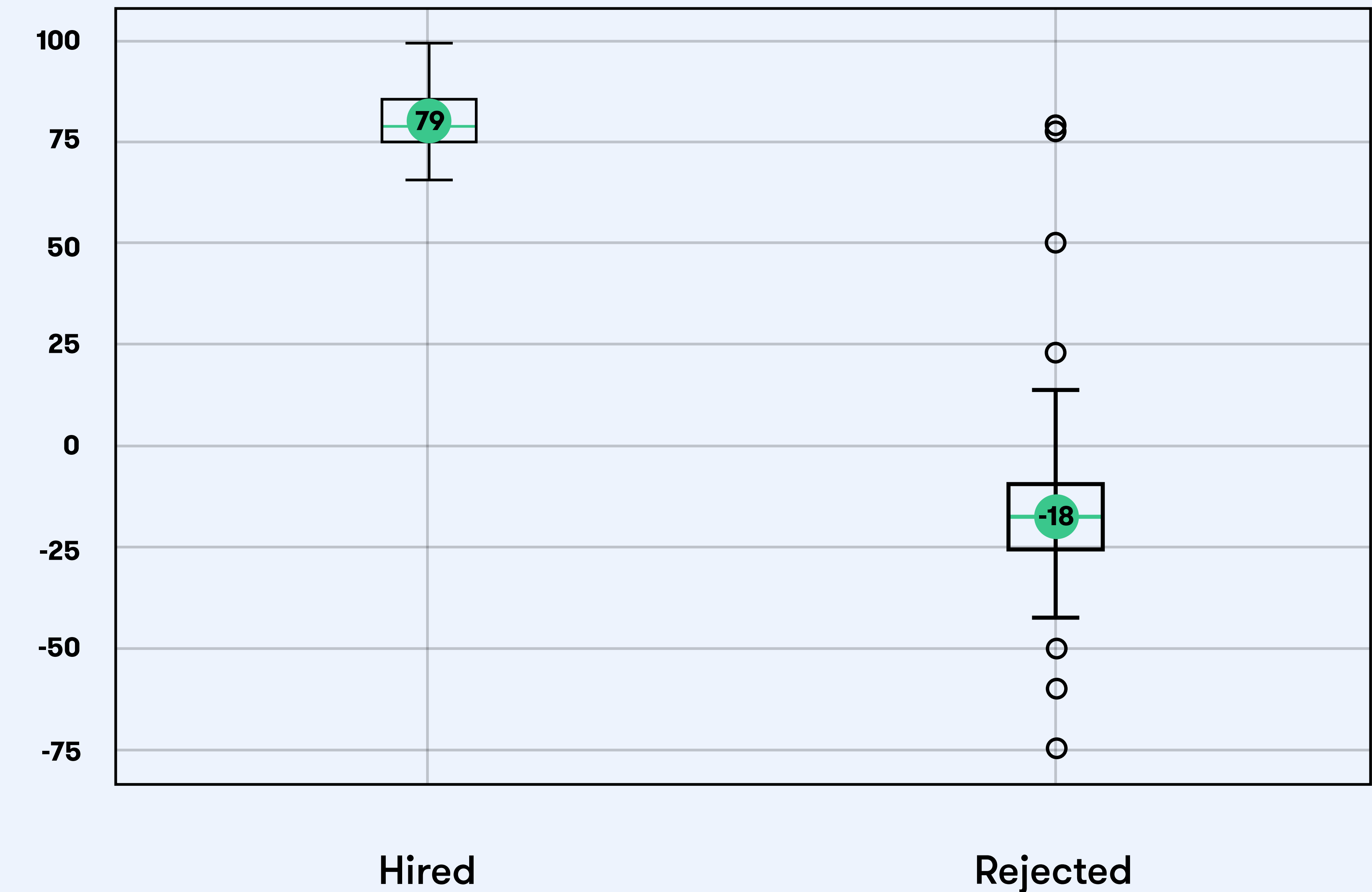


suggests that candidates would recommend the organization to friends and family, while a low score indicates dissatisfaction—a significant concern in today’s digital world, where negative experiences are easily shared across social networks and review sites.

Our research shows a stark contrast between the cNPS of Hired versus Rejected candidates. While it might not be surprising that Hired candidates would report having a better hiring experience than those rejected, it shouldn’t be assumed that there aren’t things that can be done to improve the experience for those that are rejected. When combined with the fact that nearly one in four rejected candidates (24%) say they wouldn’t apply to the company again, failing to prioritize candidate experience can lead to a substantial loss of potential talent, as negative experiences deter both candidates and those in their circles.

Throughout the report, we’ll share key findings from our extensive data on the candidate experience, offering deeper insights into candidates’ expectations and current priorities. By focusing on the candidate experience, you’ll be better positioned to retain top talent, build lasting talent pools, and strengthen your overall employer brand.

## cNPS



**Rejected candidates have an overall average NPS of -18, compared to 79 for Hired candidates.**



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## EXPLORE THE 2025 TRENDS

1. [Employee retention](#)
2. [Employer branding](#)
3. [Pay transparency](#)
4. [Quality of hire](#)
5. [Flexible work models](#)
6. [Measuring DEI](#)
7. [Strategic talent acquisition](#)
8. [AI implementation](#)





## EMPLOYEE RETENTION

# L&D becomes a key part of employee retention

In October 2024, 2.8 million people searched the keyword, '[letter of resignation](#)' on Google, and [28% of employees report being likely to change employers in the next 12 months](#). A silent revolution brews in the workplace, fueled by stress, blurry work-life boundaries, and profound discontentment.

The costs of attrition are steep, with the average cost of replacing an employee being [six to nine months that employee's salary](#). Without sufficient retention strategies, organizations risk losing top talent and face the high price of replacing them, along with the cultural disruption their exit creates. Reducing attrition and increasing employee engagement, however, is no small feat.

Enterprise-level strategies once drove retention, but not anymore, according to the Work Institute's [2024 Retention Report](#). Today's workers demand to be treated as individuals—and have the leverage to demand it. In the US, for instance, recent data shows that even if every unemployed person found a job, there would [still be over one million open vacancies](#). Talent is scarce, and employers are feeling the brunt.

Employee priorities are shifting, and new preferences are changing how organizations

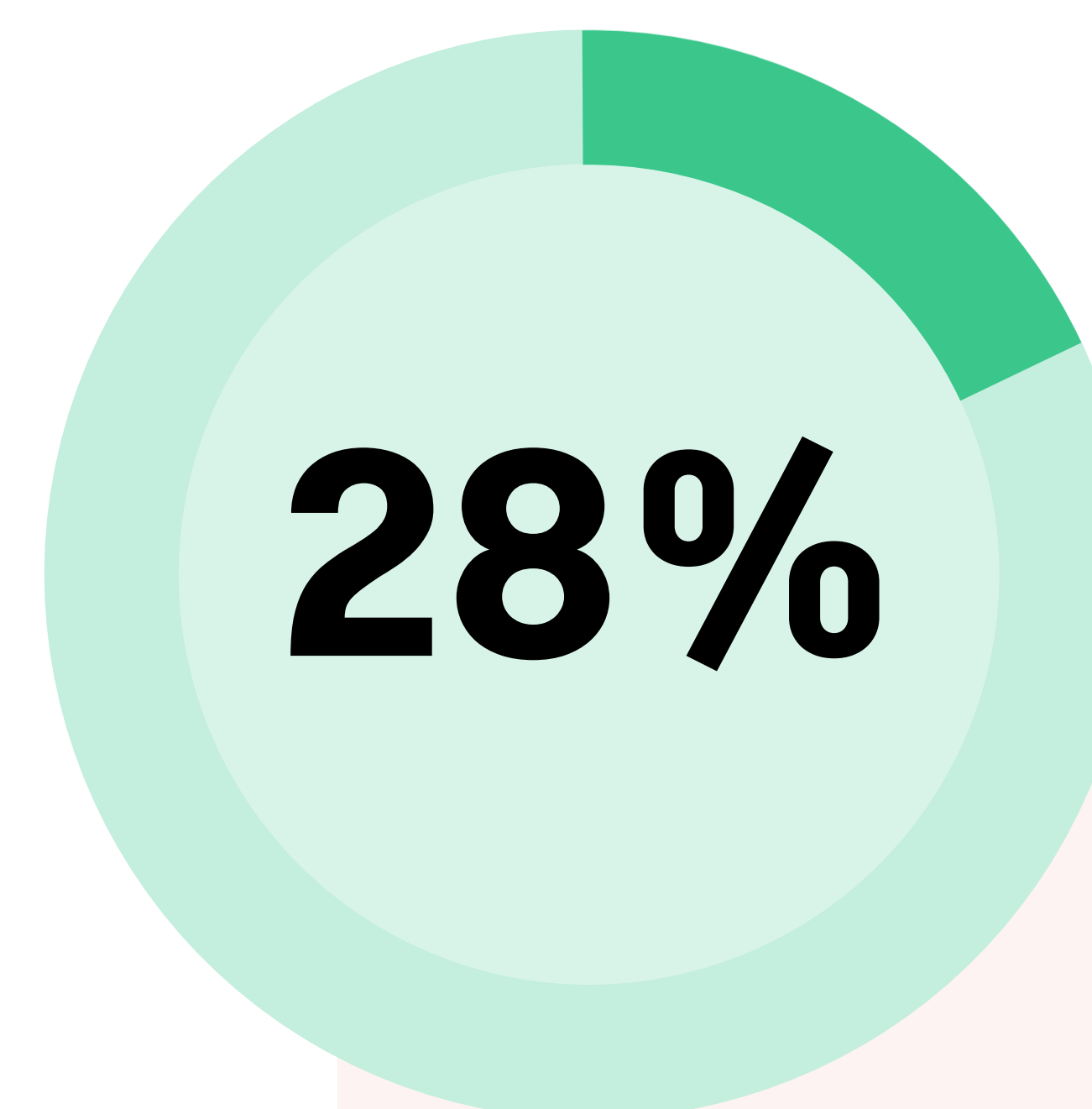
must act. Yet, employee motivations and behavior are complex, with preferences varying from person to person. So how should leaders approach employee retention going forward?

## The biggest retention currency: learning and development

Research shows that [employees stay when they have opportunities to develop new skills](#), apply them in meaningful ways, and see clear paths for advancement.

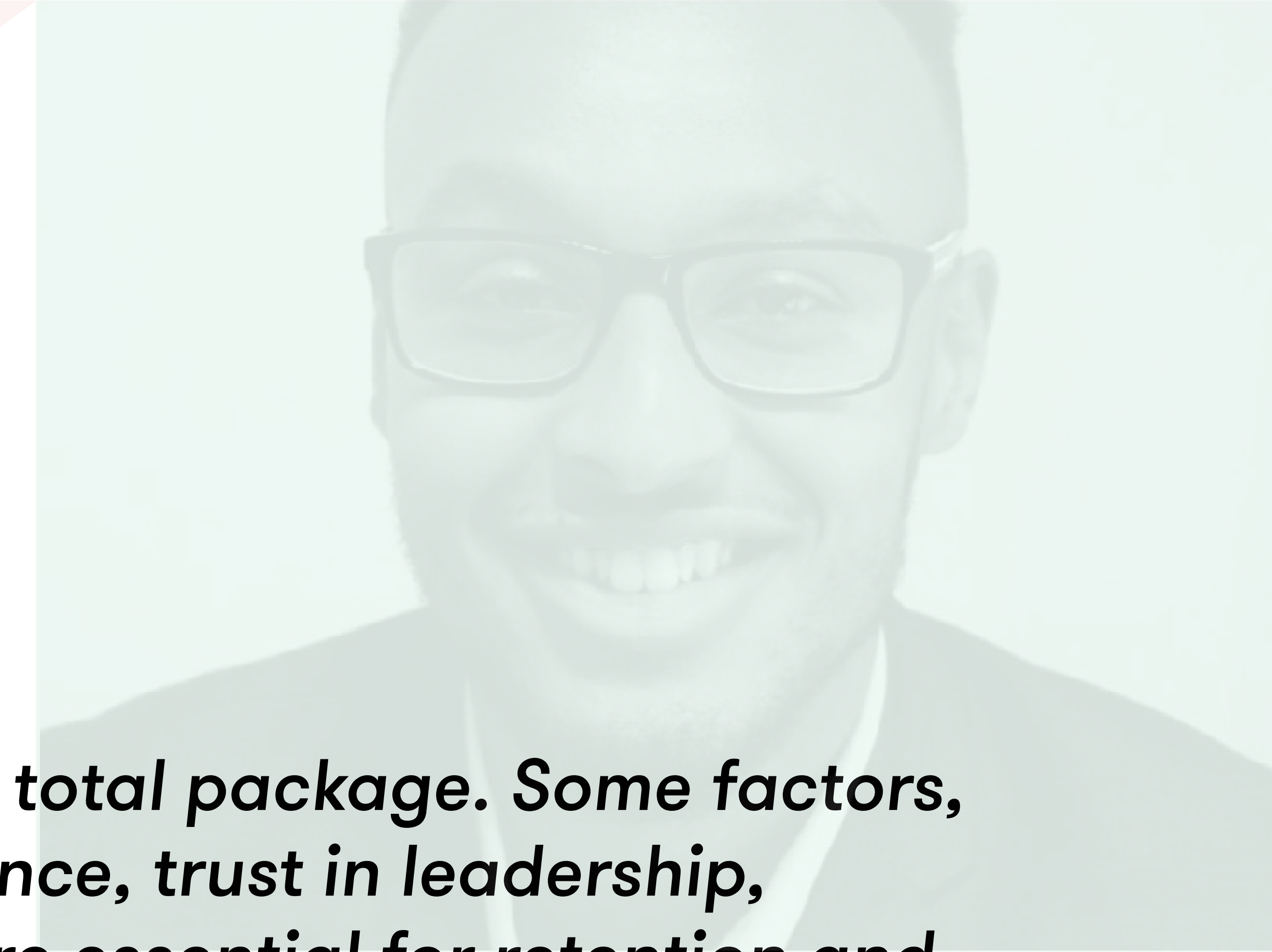
In 2025, L&D (learning and development) will become a key focus for talent retention strategies. When [learning becomes personalized and adaptive](#), it's proven to engage the workforce, address productivity losses, and fill critical skills gaps.

When employees are motivated to own their growth journeys by deciding which skills to focus on, they ultimately feel empowered and in control of their own career development. From a talent management perspective, it's more cost effective to reskill and equip existing employees for new roles than to invest in finding, hiring, and onboarding new talent. It's a win-win situation.

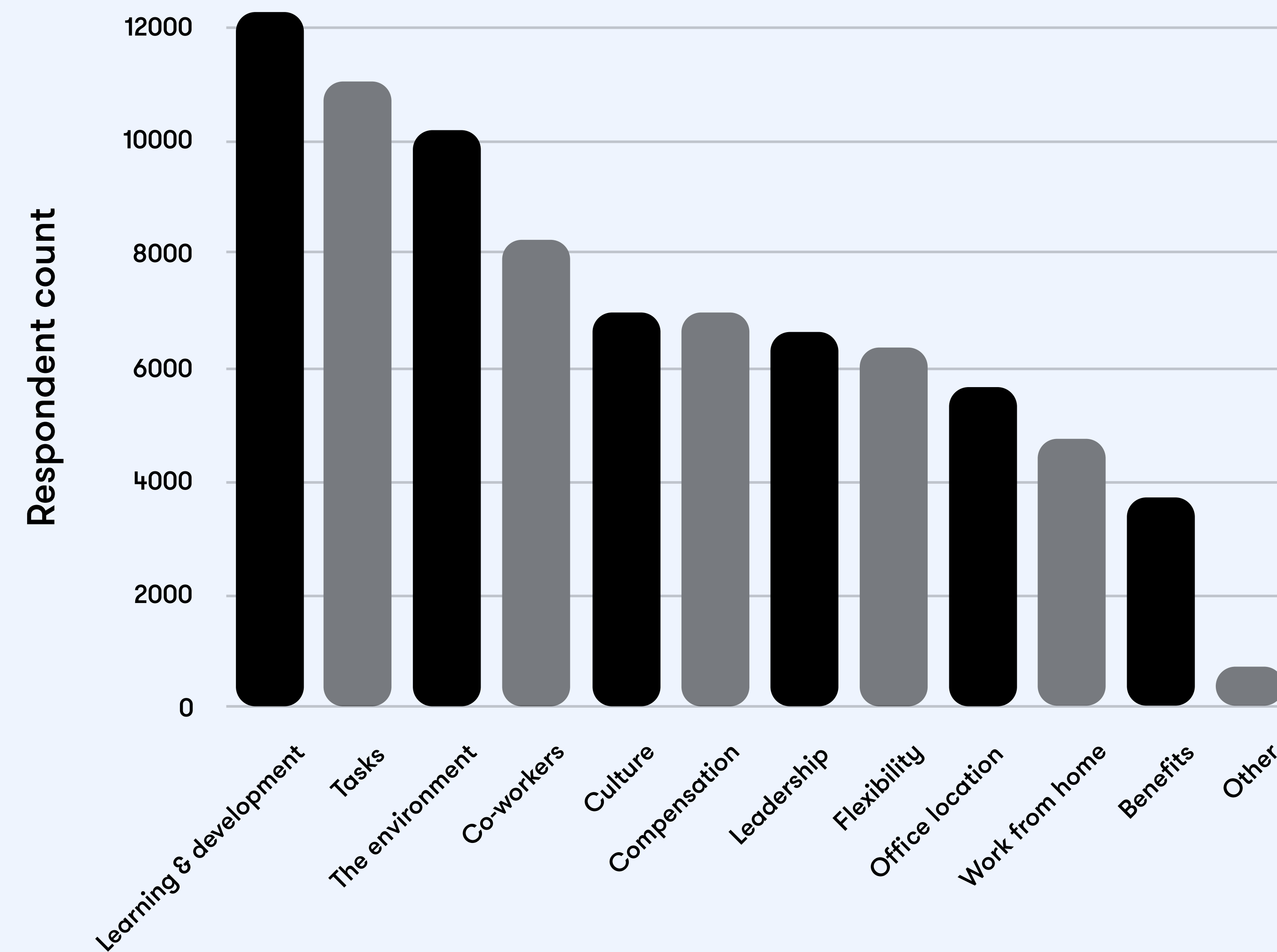


**of workers report being likely to change employers in the next 12 months**





Which of the following factors are most important when choosing a new employer?



While compensation matters, it barely ranks among the top five priorities for candidates considering a new employer. Cultural elements—such as learning and development, the work environment, and relationships with coworkers—play a bigger role in their decision-making.

Employees are looking for the total package. Some factors, like clear goals, work-life balance, trust in leadership, and a positive work culture, are essential for retention and engagement. These ‘hygiene factors’ don’t necessarily create high engagement but can lead to dissatisfaction if missing. For example, a positive work culture is key to keeping employees, but it alone isn’t enough to drive engagement.

Once these basics are in place, companies can focus on what actually boosts engagement and retention: meaningful work, growth opportunities, recognition, and supportive management. While this isn’t easy, it’s an area where HR can make a huge impact.



**Egal Saleman**

Head of HR Nordics, Netigate



## Case study: How Fusion set up its own learning engine

Fusion, a UK-based charity managing leisure facilities, faced a major talent shortage in 2022, worsened by pandemic-driven closures. This resulted in high employee turnover. In response, [Fusion invested in L&D](#), seeing it as a valuable way to tackle its recruitment challenges.

As part of its L&D strategy, Fusion offered degree apprenticeships in leadership management, and staff were given the opportunity to earn a qualification while working. This initiative helped employees develop a range of skills to support their long-term career goals, many of which were transferable to other industries. By investing in its employees, Fusion found a powerful way to retain its staff.

## Upskilling & the candidate experience

Upskilling has a deeper impact on candidate experience than organizations may realize. A recent study found that [92% of job seekers consider learning and development a decisive factor](#) when choosing between two job offers. A further 52% of employees have left a position due to a lack of opportunity for personal or professional growth.

In a workforce landscape shaped by AI and skill gaps, candidates look for employers committed to personal and professional growth. By making learning and development a core part of the [employee value proposition](#), employers send a clear message to potential hires: this is a place where you can grow. Ultimately, candidates want roles where their skills evolve, making learning and development a powerful draw in a tight talent market.



## EMPLOYER BRANDING

# Employees as brand ambassadors

Heading into 2025, signs point to employer branding remaining a top priority for TA and HR leaders. In today's competitive talent market, culture and reputation play a crucial role in whether candidates accept or decline an offer. And authenticity is at the heart of [successful employer branding strategies](#).

Moving into 2025, we expect TA teams to continue moving away from being relationship managers to become [experience architects](#), focusing on encouraging employees to share experiences that showcase real life at the organization. Authentic, employee-led content gives potential candidates a genuine window into company culture, builds relationships with desired talent pools, and accelerates the candidate journey.

In fact, one of the top five factors that prompts candidates to apply for jobs [is through employee profile stories](#). By encouraging employees to share their stories, organizations bring new life to their brand. When employees share personal insights, they're not just highlighting the organization—they're also helping candidates picture their own place within it.

The power of authentic employer branding rests in the opportunity to highlight aspects of a company culture that employees both identify with and reflect their

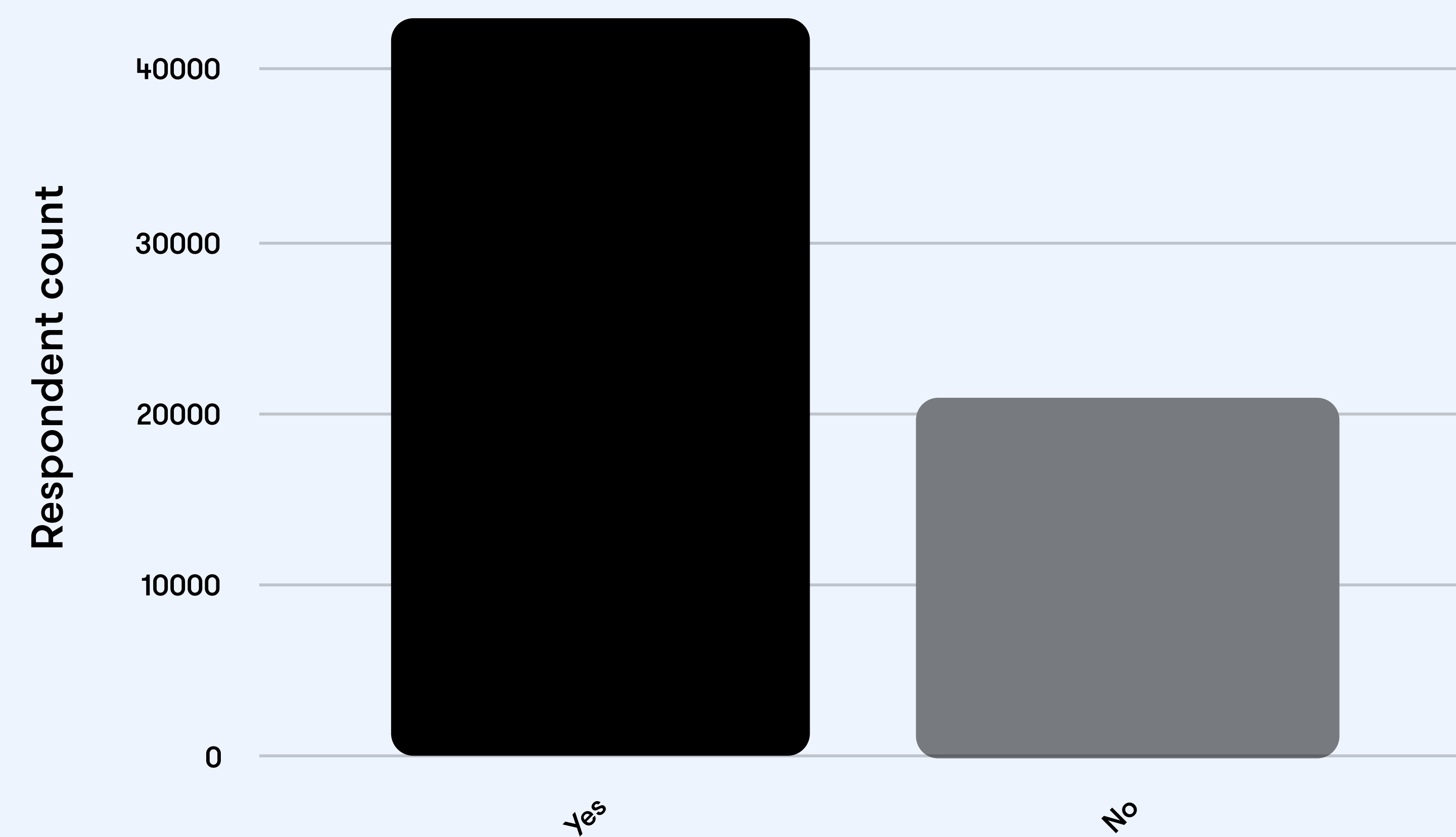


lived experiences. With employee-generated storytelling—whether through video testimonials, LinkedIn posts, personal blogs, or “day-in-the-life” snapshots—companies can showcase their culture in a way that feels genuine and trustworthy.

This influence goes beyond talent attraction; employees who share positive stories also reinforce the brand for consumers. Research shows that [customers want to do business with companies that treat their employees well](#). Customers feel reassured when they know they are spending their money at a company that values its people and workplace culture.



Had you heard of (company name) before applying for this job?



*Around one-third of candidates had not heard of the company before applying for a role. This raises the stakes—and the opportunity—for the hiring process to not only promote the role but also make a strong impression of the company.*

## Employer branding & the candidate experience

Candidates are looking for more than just a paycheck; they seek meaningful, purpose-driven work. Organizations with a clear mission—and that actively market it—will be the top choice for top talent.

However, leading with purpose needs to be authentic. Candidates expect more than polished, curated branding; they want insight into the real, everyday experiences of employees. As a result, employer branding has evolved, shifting from a controlled corporate narrative to authentic, employee-centered storytelling.

This approach benefits candidates and employers alike.

Candidates are [three times more likely to trust employees](#)

[than recruiters](#) to give an accurate picture of what working

at a company is like. For employers, this means the message gets

amplified as employees tend to have ten times more LinkedIn

connections than a corporate account has followers.



## PAY TRANSPARENCY

# From compliance to culture?

The world of pay and compensation is incredibly nuanced, shaped by regional, national, and supranational laws, as well as company practices. However, one thing is certain: [employees increasingly desire pay transparency from their employers](#). This expectation is transforming business practices and the candidate experience.

While historically, pay transparency has been a contentious topic, it's now a critical factor in job decisions. Internal talent is more likely to switch jobs if a competing company offers greater pay transparency, [even if the salary stays the same](#).

Pay transparency laws sweeping across the world are only accelerating this trend. For example, in the US, several states now require employers to include salary ranges in job postings or share them if requested. In Sweden, for example, salary conversations usually happen around the fourth stage of the hiring process. However, under the EU's new Pay Transparency Directive, effective June 2026, [such practices will no longer be possible](#). The Directive will require companies over a certain size to report gender pay gaps, be upfront about pay earlier in the process, and explain how pay and promotions are determined and managed.

These legal requirements are certainly going to change how organizations tackle pay transparency during the entire employee life cycle. With less than two years until the



new rules of the Directive must be reflected in the national laws of EU countries, it's time for businesses to move toward fairer pay practices and incorporate them into their talent attraction and retention strategies.

## Pay transparency as a competitive differentiator

When companies withhold pay information, they risk hurting employee loyalty and brand reputation. From a DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) standpoint, disclosing pay early in the recruitment process levels the playing field for all. Pay transparency has been [shown to reduce disparities](#) related to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other aspects of diversity.

As more countries adopt transparency laws, leaders should take stock of how these changes affect their candidates and workforce, particularly those from marginalized groups who have historically been impacted by pay inequalities.



## An intersectional lens to pay transparency in the EU

The EU Pay Transparency Directive marks a significant step toward addressing pay inequality across the EU. One of its groundbreaking aspects is the inclusion of intersectional discrimination—recognizing that individuals may experience discrimination due to overlapping identities, such as gender and ethnicity or sexual orientation.

What can companies do to ensure they are a fair pay employer when considering intersectional discrimination? Future of work expert, Annita Lettink shares practical tips for companies.

- **First, start collecting the data:** Pay special attention to what you don't know. For example, in some countries, an employer isn't allowed to register the ethnicity of an employee. But just because you can't measure it, that does not mean that you don't have pay discrimination.
- **Training and awareness:** Educate managers and HR professionals on the broad spectrum of pay discrimination. Often, pay disparities happen unconsciously, so it's essential to raise awareness across the organization.
- **Transparent job evaluations:** Use standardized criteria for evaluating roles and responsibilities. Ensure that employees with similar job functions and qualifications are paid fairly, regardless of their personal background or any other characteristics.
- **Comprehensive pay audits:** Regularly audit pay across all categories, not just gender. Look for patterns in pay based on race, age, disability, and other characteristics, and address any unjustified differences. Solutions that include

multivariate regression analysis will show exactly what characteristics influence pay.



[Annita Lettink](#)

Future of work speaker & author

### Pay transparency & the candidate experience

Being transparent about pay early in the recruitment process helps both companies and candidates make more informed decisions to find a perfect match. Instead of losing candidates deep into the recruitment process, being transparent about compensation from the get-go can help TA teams focus on qualified candidates without wasting time or resources.

It also enables job seekers to bring the best versions of themselves to the interview, without having to navigate uncomfortable conversations around pay. In one study by SHRM Research, around 70% of companies that listed pay ranges in job ads reported that it [led to more people applying for their jobs](#), and 66% said it increased the quality of applicants.

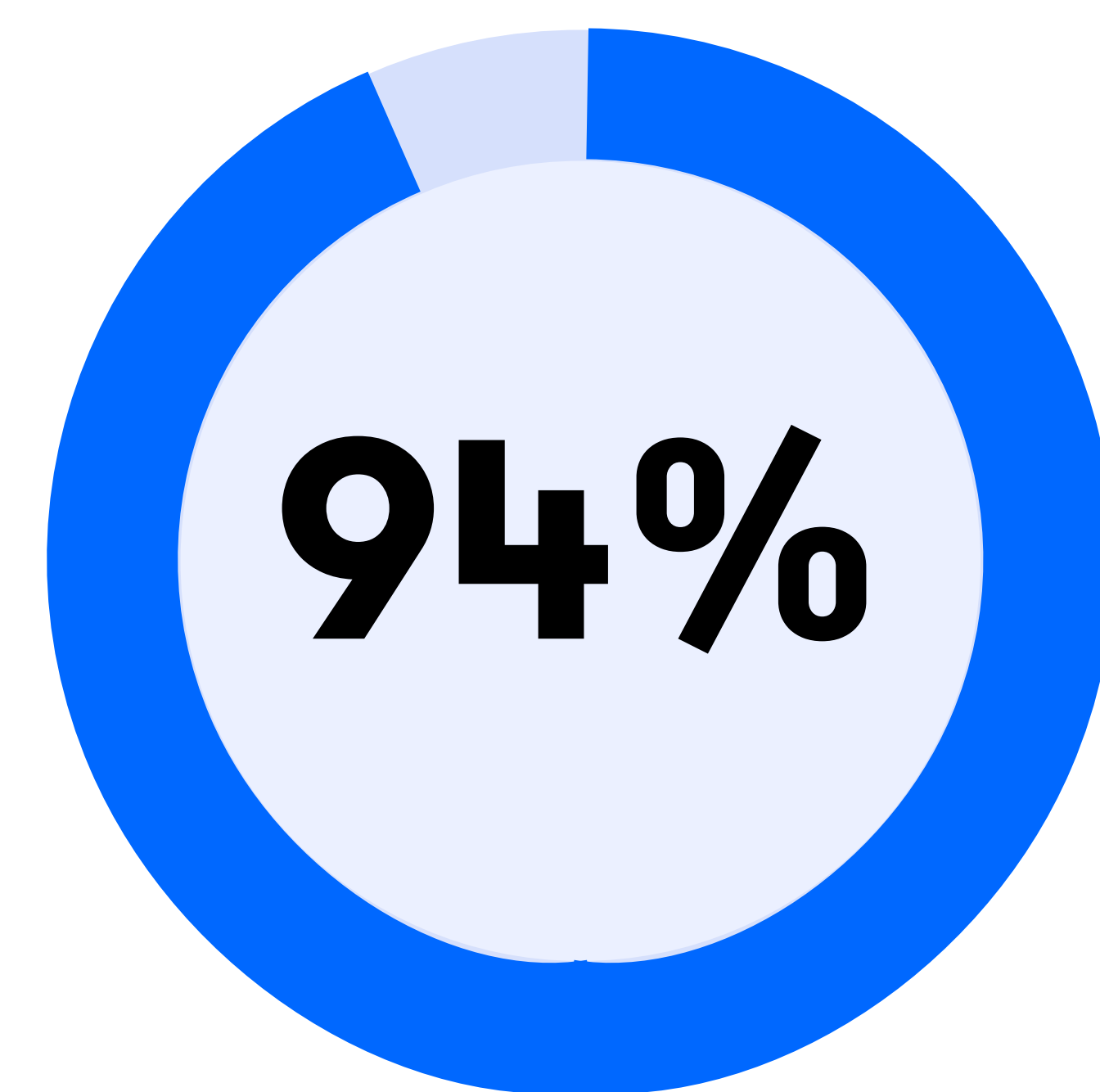


## QUALITY OF HIRE

# Quality of hire: the metric of the future

As hiring slows across many industries, organizations are placing greater emphasis on hiring for quality rather than speed. In fact, [54% of recruitment professionals believe quality of hire will drive recruiting](#) over the next five years. While talent acquisition has traditionally focused on metrics like time-to-hire and offer acceptance rates, leaders are now asking a crucial question: How do our hires actually perform, and how are we measuring that?

Hiring is expensive, and with retention a top priority, TA teams are shifting focus to ensure quality. This has led to a reevaluation of outdated hiring tactics, with many moving from credential-based screening to evidence-based recruitment. Measuring quality of hire encourages TA leaders to dig deeper, assessing each new hire's productivity, motivation, cultural fit, and skill development over time.



**of recruiters agree that skills-based hiring is more predictive of success than CVs or resumes**

## The promise of skills-based hiring

As jobs and the skills required continue to evolve, companies are recognizing that adaptability and resilience are crucial qualities for future success. Skills-based hiring, which emphasizes a candidate's specific competencies and transferable skills over conventional qualifications, offers a path to enhance quality of hire. For instance, organizations like Cushman & Wakefield have [realized the potential of tapping into underused talent pools](#), such as military veterans, for their transferable skills like leadership and project management. As 77% of business and HR executives note, [the ability to flexibly apply skills is key for navigating future disruptions](#). Skills-based

hiring not only prepares businesses for tomorrow's needs but also improves quality of hire, with [94% of recruiters agreeing it's more predictive of success than resumes](#).

Despite these insights, many companies' commitment to skills-based hiring remains

at the policy level, without significant changes to actual hiring practices. To fully realize the potential of skills-based hiring, organizations will need to reform processes and align incentives, avoiding the trap of "in name only" adoption. In practice, this requires defining the skills essential for success and using the right methods to identify high-quality candidates whose skills align with organizational goals.



## Q&A with Louise Thulin from Home of Recruitment

**Q: What are the biggest advantages of skills-based recruitment, for both candidates and employers?**

**A:** From the company perspective, I think one of the major advantages is that it increases the quality of your hiring process. It helps companies have a clear structure in their recruitment process and they know what to evaluate at every step. In general, this approach makes the process more qualitative, more structured, and it becomes easier to make good hiring decisions that can be accurately traced. It often becomes clear by the end that you are making decisions based on the right factors and not getting sidetracked by irrelevant things that, as humans, we tend to fixate on. It decreases the risk of discrimination and increases transparency. And, of course, these are benefits for the candidate as well.

**Q: What happens to the candidate experience when you start working skills-based?**

**A:** It depends on how you design your process and how you communicate with candidates. I believe you must be very clear about why certain steps are necessary because candidates generally want more transparency and understanding. They also want things to move faster and to understand why. But, in general, if done right,

a skills-based approach can improve the candidate experience. Candidates are given more qualitative feedback and have an understanding of what is qualifying for a specific role. I'm thinking particularly of tests or certain types of screening questions that are done early on. If candidates don't understand why they're investing time in this and why you as an employer are doing it, it might not always be a positive experience.

**Q: Thinking about starting with skills-based recruitment, what are the first steps? How should one approach it?**

**A:** Start where you are. Analyze your recruitment process from both a hiring and a candidate perspective. Think about what systems you have in place, how you're using them today, and whether you can create a clearer structure with more transparency. Almost all companies have an ATS (Applicant Tracking System) nowadays. While it may be more or less tailored for recruitment, the biggest barrier is not the system but that companies are not fully using the capabilities. So that's where I would start—pick the low-hanging fruit.

For example, check if you can use templates in your ATS that support your processes. Is there a template for creating a thorough job profile? Do you have competency-based interview questions? Do you have competency frameworks that can be used when working with hiring managers to create job profiles? These are simple but important steps to get started with a competency-based approach. And, say goodbye to the cover letter once and for all and use selection questions to capture relevant skills early in the process.



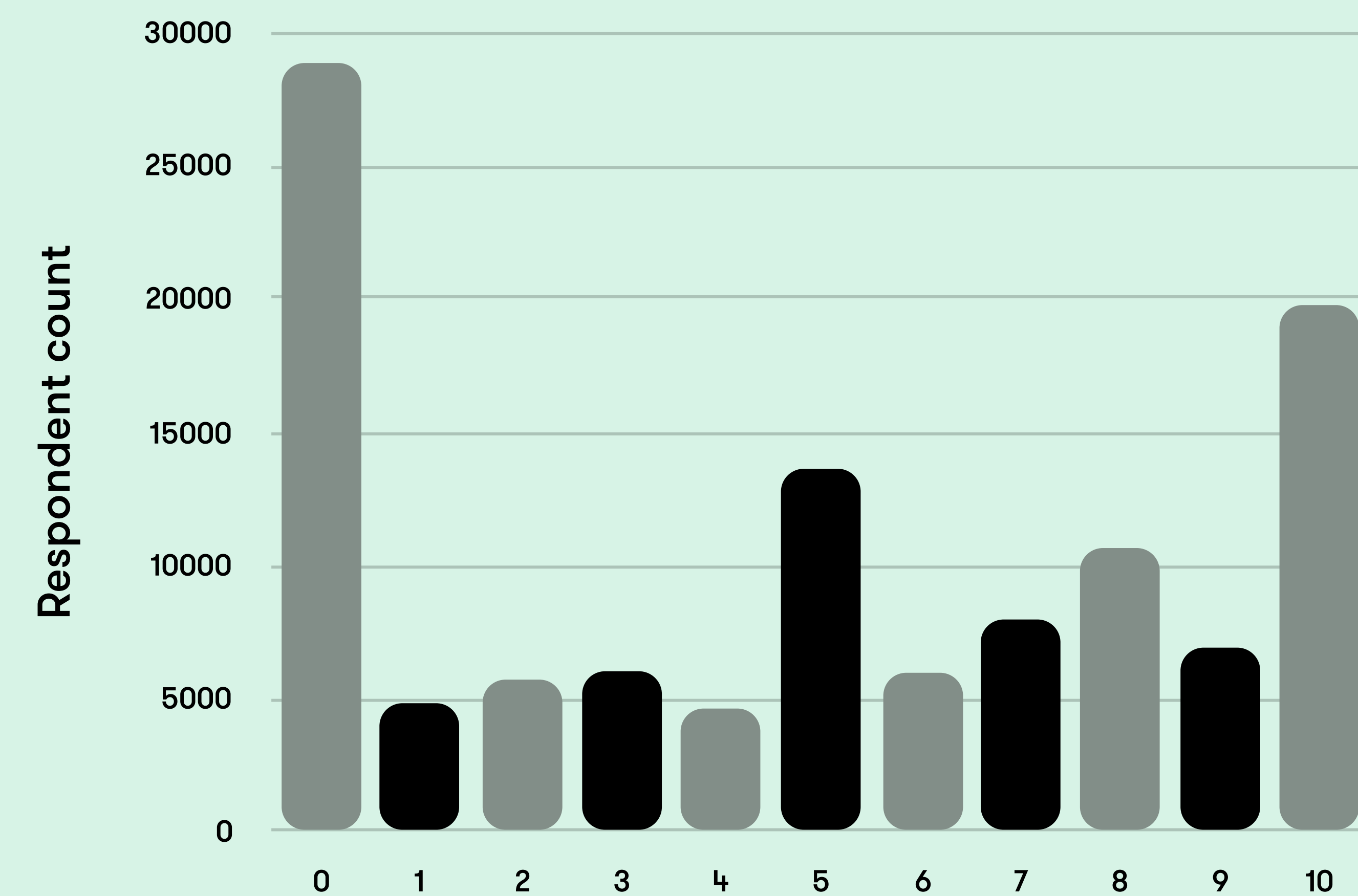
**Louise Thulin**

Strategic Advisor, Home of Recruitment



## Did you have a clear understanding of the steps in the recruitment process?

0=very unclear, 10=very clear



A significant number of candidates report having no understanding of the steps in the recruitment process. Employers can reduce this confusion by clearly outlining the process on career sites or job ads.

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*I think most organizations are not at a place where they can measure quality of hire, but that's not on TA. The problem is that many companies don't have mature enough processes to collect and evaluate performance insights often enough to really measure quality of hire. Ideally, you'd want to keep track of the competencies assessed during hiring in a fair, data-driven, and scalable way. A good first step, if you don't have a system in place, is to check in on those key competencies at 30, 90, and 120 days after a new hire starts.*



**Arsaman Bahrami**

Head of People & Commercial Operations,  
Precisely



## Quality of hire & the candidate experience

Focusing on quality of hire enhances the candidate experience by aligning organizational needs with candidate expectations from the outset. This clarity encourages a hiring process that balances candidate expectations with business goals, leading to a smoother, more thoughtful recruitment journey.

When organizations focus on quality of hire, they often incorporate structured interviews, candidate assessments and case studies—all of which provide a clearer sense of candidate fit while reducing selection biases.

In turn, clarity at each stage of the hiring process is [essential to a positive candidate experience](#). Candidates value understanding why specific skills are evaluated, how the process aligns with the role, and how they'll contribute to the company. For the best outcome, build a transparent line of communication with candidates from the get-go, and explain why they are being evaluated a certain way from the very beginning.





**FLEXIBLE WORK**

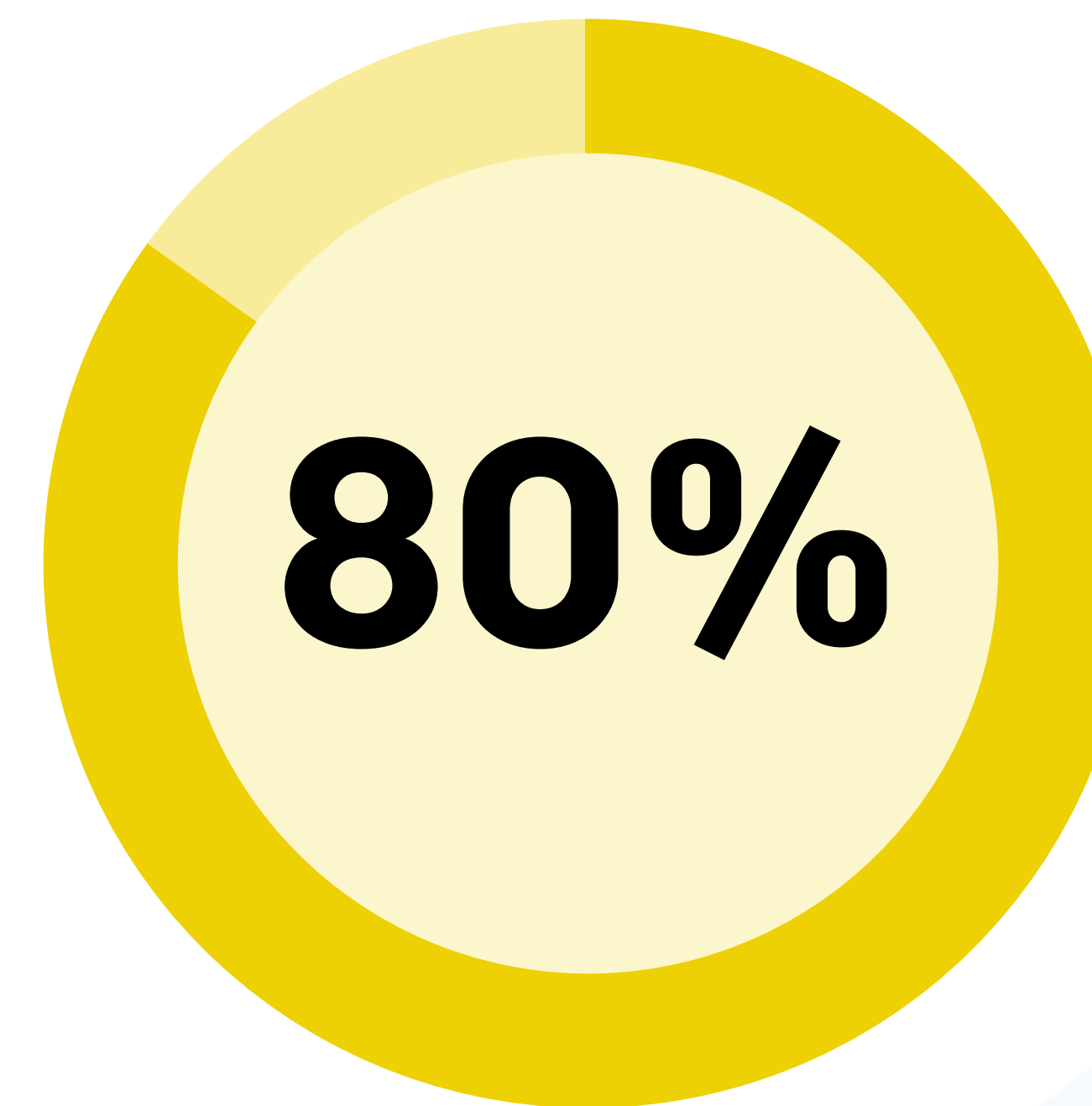
# The office of the future is hybrid

Five years from now, we step into the office of the future. What will we notice? Some remote work experts predict that [the office is going to become a member's club](#), where employees will selectively go to socialize and find belonging. Others predict that traditional corporate offices will disappear entirely, giving way to mixed-use, flexible spaces—with hybrid work representing the first step toward this new normal.

## The rise of return to office policies

Hybrid models consistently [drive employee satisfaction, productivity, and profitability](#) over fully in-office setups. Yet, there is a strong, competing push to get workers back on-site—what some call the “Great Return.” Company leaders [try to compel](#), or [even mandate](#), office returns with arguments that in-person collaboration is necessary for creativity, innovation and developing company culture.

Amazon, for example, joins a growing list of companies implementing stricter policies, with a five-day-a-week office mandate starting in January 2025. The question arises: who will ultimately shape the future of work—the CEOs or their employees?



*of candidates are unwilling to accept roles without hybrid options*

## What employees want

Employers are [losing talent to return-to-office mandates](#), with work-life balance remaining a top priority for employees. Many workers are simply unwilling to give up flexibility for a full return to the office.

Where does that leave employers? Analysis by McKinsey reveals that companies with employees who work in the same place most of the time [are more likely to offer hybrid work options](#) ▶



week—whether at home or in the office—[report lower revenue growth than those where employees work in multiple locations](#). TA leaders need a long-term hybrid strategy that supports workplace culture and productivity without completely sacrificing employee expectations.

## Finding common ground

Despite the debate between remote and in-office work, hybrid arrangements have remained [the most common work model](#) (over in-person and remote) since 2022, revealing the “either-or” framing to be overly simplistic. Even with some return-to-office mandates in place, six in ten employees [prefer hybrid work](#), a third favor fully remote, and fewer than 10% want to work on-site full-time.

Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, there’s now plenty of data to guide how people should return to work.

Take Microsoft, for example—they use [tools to track employee collaboration](#) via email and calendars, allowing them to identify where network strength is waning or team silos are forming. Whatever option your organization chooses, it’s essential to lean on data and insights when planning the future of work and be intentional with your decisions.

## Key takeaways

### Talent preferences have shifted:

Nearly every second candidate across demographics prefers a flexible setup with remote options. A significant [80% of candidates are unwilling to accept roles without hybrid options](#).

### Flexibility is non-negotiable for top talent:

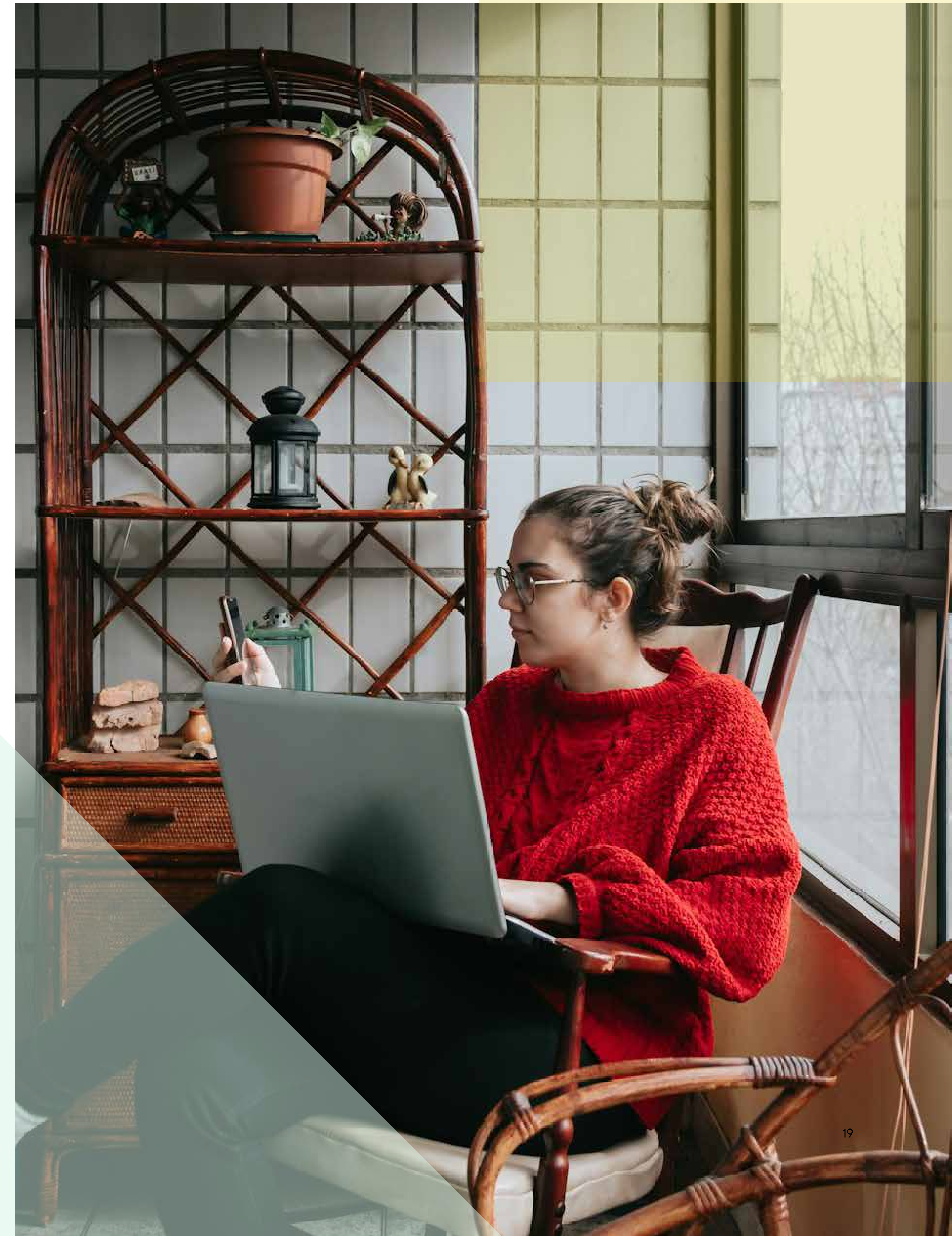
Candidates no longer view flexibility as a perk but as a basic need that must be met. As Bryan Mayo of Atlassian points out, top talent wants to innovate and contribute [without sacrificing personal priorities like family time or flexibility](#).



## Hybrid work & the candidate experience

As the demand for flexible work persists from candidates, talent teams are often caught in a balancing act. While candidates consistently prioritize flexibility, leadership may push a return to the office for productivity or culture-building reasons. Managing the expectations of both parties is key to remaining competitive.

Employers with flexible work policies enjoy a hiring edge: they are [29% more likely to receive applications for their job postings](#). LinkedIn data also shows that despite a drop in fully remote roles, job seekers' interest in remote work remains high. Workers have grown used to flexibility, and they're not willing to give it up.







## MEASURING DEI

# The next phase of DEI

Following global events and widespread calls for justice and equality, [DEI \(diversity, equity and inclusion\) jobs peaked in early 2023](#), then fell 5% later in the year, and fell even more in 2024. Attrition rates for DEI roles have nearly doubled compared to non-DEI positions. The rise and fall of positions like Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) is especially telling—many CDO roles have been among the first to go amid shrinking budgets and mass layoffs. And for those CDOs still employed, [many report lacking sufficient resources to do their work effectively](#).

Yet, when it comes to DEI, there is still critical work to be done to build diverse teams, foster inclusive work cultures, and meet candidates' evolving needs and expectations. Looking ahead, there will be a shift to measuring outcome-based metrics and away from input metrics.

## Using data for meaningful DEI interventions

Companies cannot afford to ease up on DEI. Employees who are millennials or younger [now make up a majority of the workforce](#), with Gen Z expected to make up over 25% of it in 2025. It's a globally-conscious cohort that is far more diverse across a range of dimensions and has greater demands for inclusivity and belonging to be prioritized by their employer. To stay competitive, companies must attract and retain talent from diverse backgrounds.

According to DEI strategist and consultant Lily Zheng, a successful DEI intervention [hinges on looking at the data](#). This includes analyzing exit interviews, reviewing people analytics, and bringing in assessment professionals to survey the workforce. It's important, however, to recognize that there is no quick fix for DEI—true transformation can't be achieved with a single 90-minute training. Instead, it demands a comprehensive, ground-up approach supported from multiple angles and, most importantly, continuous follow-up to track and assess the impact of each initiative.

## DEI & the candidate experience

As the workforce diversifies, DEI has become increasingly important to the candidate experience, influencing both how potential employees perceive an organization and how they move through the hiring process. A recent survey of job seekers found that [86% of minority and underrepresented candidates view diversity as an important factor](#) when applying for jobs. For companies looking to attract and retain top talent, especially from younger and more diverse generations, integrating DEI into recruitment is mission-critical.

A strong DEI strategy can improve the candidate experience by building inclusivity into the recruitment selection process. For example, using processes that minimize the risk of bias like structured interview questions and skills-based assessments, ensures that candidates from diverse backgrounds have a fair shot at success.



## DEI in 2025: Two recruiting perspectives

**How are companies measuring the success of their DEI initiatives, and what outcomes are they seeing?**

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Many companies notice that DEI efforts make Talent Acquisition easier. A strong DEI commitment not only enhances a company's reputation but also boosts its ability to attract high-quality candidates. TA teams interact with so many people on a daily basis, and a candidate experience that focuses on DEI gradually builds a strong employer brand that will help attract top talent.

In organizations that have successfully implemented DEI initiatives, you'll find diversity at the manager/leadership level. When there is an increase in diverse leaders, it naturally contributes to attracting more diverse candidates. This creates a positive cycle and will over time foster a strong DEI culture.



**Fredrik Raynal**

Growth Partner and Co-founder, Agile Search

**How do you see DEI initiatives evolving or shifting in priority in 2025?**

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The focus will likely shift towards tangible results, such as increased representation of diverse groups in leadership roles and measurable impacts on innovation and business performance. There will also be a stronger emphasis on equity, ensuring that all employees have equal access to opportunities and resources, and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and heard.

However, given the current economic recession in some places, these initiatives might face additional challenges. Budget constraints could limit the resources allocated to DEI programs, making it essential to demonstrate their value clearly and link them to business outcomes. Companies may need to be more strategic in their DEI efforts, focusing on high-impact areas that can drive both inclusivity and economic recovery.



**Gabriela Moraes**

Senior Tech Recruiter, Agile Search



STRATEGIC TALENT ACQUISITION

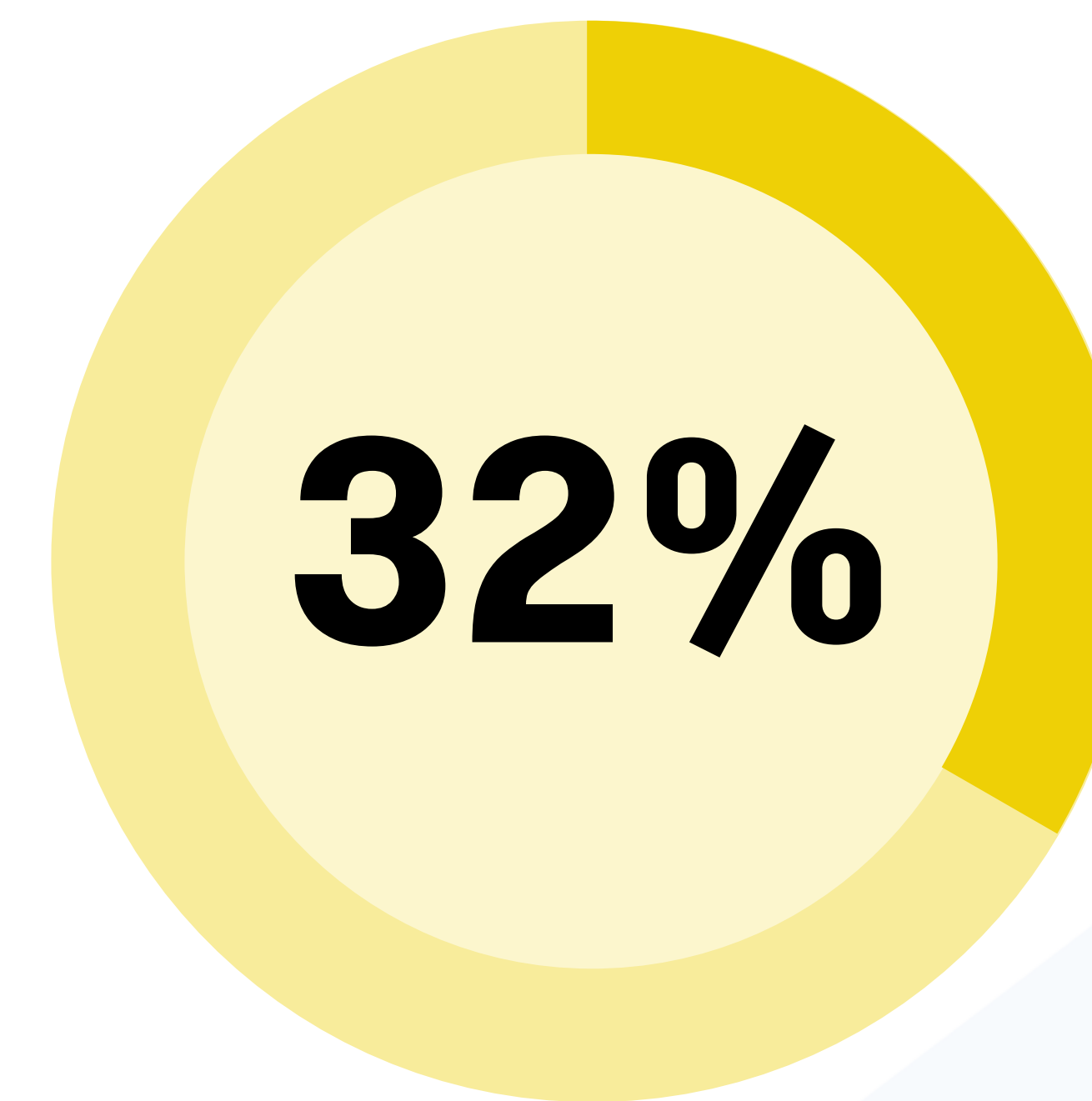
# Teams double down on proving strategic value

TA leaders are increasingly frustrated by a lack of strategic support from business leaders. Only [32% of TA leaders feel they're seen as strategic partners](#) within their organizations, while 42% say their company lacks a workforce plan, and 46% admit business priorities change so frequently they're "running around" to keep up.

Even in areas where HR teams are most confident of their business impact — contributing to overall company productivity and cost efficiency— they are [skeptical that the C-suite is likely to recognize that impact](#). HR teams are not getting the resources or support they need to do their jobs effectively.

Globally, TA leaders are being asked to focus on cost savings and are increasingly shut out of their company's strategic workforce planning. The lack of inclusion in strategic discussions and a clear workforce plan [creates major obstacles for TA teams](#), impacting their ability to align with long-term business goals.

Moving forward, there's an opportunity for management to close the gap between



***32% of TA leaders feel they're seen as strategic partners in their organizations***

business operations and core TA functions by offering TA leaders a seat at the table and including them in strategic planning. Ultimately, embedding TA strategies from the top down is crucial for operational success.

Demonstrating the connection between people programs and bottom-line objectives is a focus for TA teams as they try to secure buy-in from their C-suite executives and help them understand the true value they bring to the business.





*Being strategic in talent acquisition means focusing on internal mobility and recognizing employees' potential for growth across different roles and departments. Managers who aren't used to working closely with HR might see HR as simply handling things around the office or planning events. But for the organization's mission, yearly targets, and strategic goals to be met, it's important for TA and HR to be actively involved and integrated into each department's objectives.*



**[Duyen Jin Nguyen](#)**

Manager & Operations Lead, Amby

## Strategic TA & the candidate experience

Delivering a first-class candidate experience isn't just the recruiter's job. It requires collaboration across the hiring community—from hiring managers to senior leadership. All parties must shoulder the responsibility to ensure every candidate's touchpoint with the organization reflects workplace values and delivers a positive, consistent experience. At the end of the day, candidates who experience a frictionless, enjoyable hiring process are [76% more likely to accept a job offer](#).

[Technology can play a key role in this collaboration](#). AI-driven tools and shared dashboards streamline communication, remove bottlenecks, and allow teams to align on candidate evaluations and hiring decisions.

Another way to reinforce a strategic partnership is to team up with hiring managers to understand their hiring needs. Kick-off with a startup meeting to align on expectations, role requirements, and what success looks like in the role.

Beyond this, collaborating with stakeholders on a hiring blueprint can standardize your hiring process and align it with long-term business goals. When the hiring community operates as a unit, it bolsters the candidate experience and improves the organization's ability to attract, retain, and develop top talent.

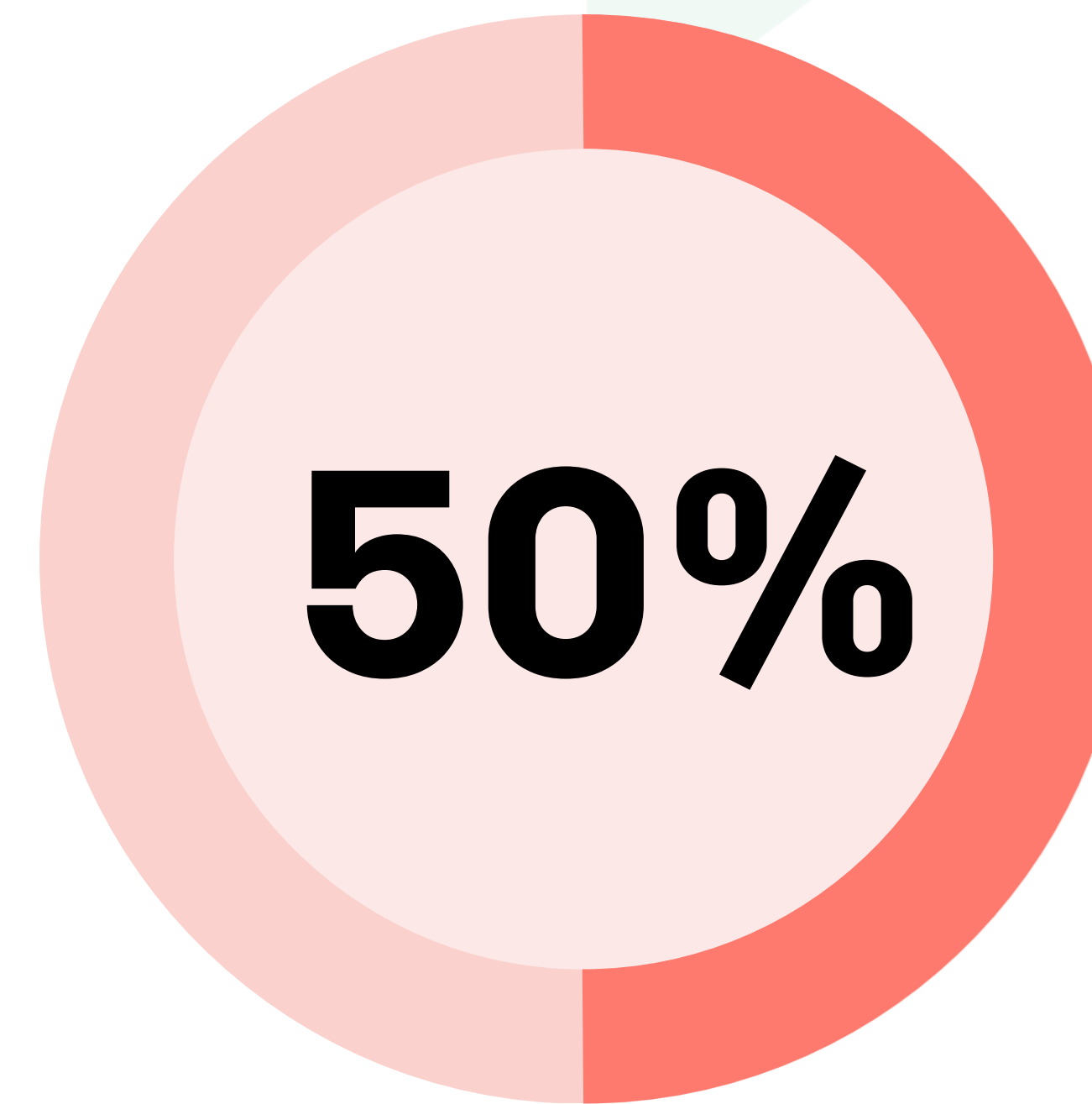
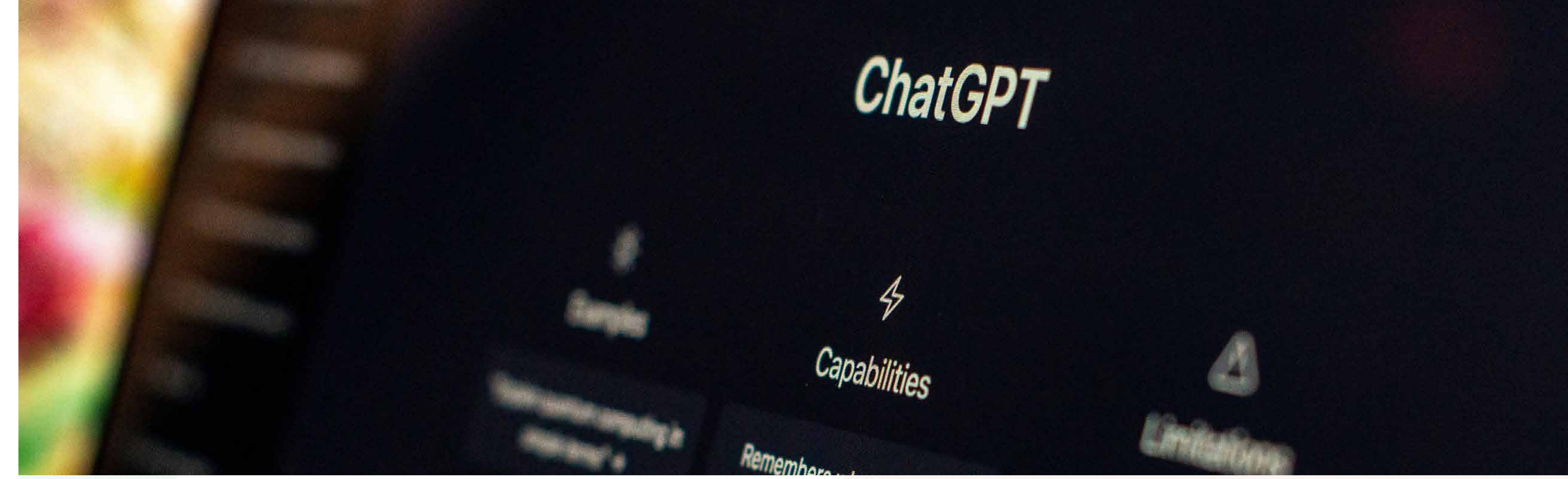


# Putting generative AI to work

If 2024 was about experimentation, 2025 is where AI at work gets real. [Three out of four people already use generative AI in the workplace](#), with its use nearly doubling in only the last six to twelve months. Employees across nearly all industries struggling with workloads are turning to AI for relief. Companies also recognize how imperative AI is to the bottom line, with [41% of leaders planning to redesign their business processes with AI](#) in the next five years.

## What GenAI means for recruitment

GenAI is reshaping recruitment in fundamental ways. It's helping managers automate tasks, like [drafting job descriptions or suggesting screening questions](#) based on competency profiles. While managers still need to review the final output, AI can dramatically improve both speed and quality. AI is also helping personalize candidate interactions. When you have hundreds of applicants, GenAI makes it easier to customize messages, including offering alternative job suggestions if candidates do not match the original role.



*of all job seekers are using AI tools to improve, update or create their resumes and job applications*

On the other side, recruiters are grappling with the effects of AI in the hands of candidates. Nearly [half of all candidates use AI tools](#) to apply for jobs, complete assessments, hunt for new roles, and research companies. This increases the volume of applications, as candidates can apply to more jobs with AI support.

We would also be remiss if we discussed AI without addressing its risks. Bias, of course, remains a central concern, as machines may be guilty of not only perpetuating human bias but increasing it in some cases. There is also the reality of the practical challenges of AI-powered applications. Around [50% of applications are AI-generated](#) for a typical open role. Recruiters and hiring managers must wade through AI-assisted applications that can mask candidates who aren't truly a fit for the role.





*With AI, recruiters will offload the admin side of their work, but will pick up new skills, like how to work with AI and other emerging recruitment tech. They will also strengthen their communication and stakeholder management skills, as they become adept at explaining AI's value to key stakeholders, like company leaders, hiring managers, and candidates.*

*What recruiters really want is to build stronger talent pools and make better use of referrals and employee networks—the areas that have the biggest impact on hire quality and retention. With AI taking care of the admin and sourcing tasks, recruiters can zero in on where they make the biggest difference.*



**Daan Huisman**

Co-founder, Recruitment Tech Masters

## **AI implementation & the candidate experience**

While automation can help with efficiency, it shouldn't interfere with the personal touch that many candidates appreciate. Striking the right balance requires keeping the candidate experience at the center of the process.

AI has great potential to enhance candidate experience by expediting the recruitment process. In what is still a candidate's market, being able to move fast without losing quality can help secure top talent and meet candidates expectations for a quicker, more responsive recruitment experience.

As Simon Sinek says, "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it." In hiring, this translates to building connections with candidates and showing them your company's mission and values in a way that technology alone cannot do. In an age where technology enables speed, authenticity and connection can turn a good candidate experience into a great one.



## Conclusion

2025 will be a year of balance for HR and TA teams—balancing technology and human connection, efficiency and personalization, flexibility and structure. From AI-driven technologies reshaping how we work, the variety of flexible work arrangements, the shift from CVs to skills-based hiring, to measuring the candidate experience and treating them like customers, today's actions are key to future-proofing organizations for the transformations ahead.

Automation may streamline recruitment processes in this dynamic talent landscape, but the personal touch remains essential. Candidates are doubling down on what they need from an employer: a purpose-driven organization, a personal hiring experience, and above all, to be treated with respect and dignity at every step. Every trend, no matter how innovative, should consider these expectations.

The trends identified in this report are meant to serve as a guide for the future, but success requires careful planning and prioritization. Which trends align with your mission and will make the greatest impact? Where can you gain an edge by leading the way? And what risks might you face if certain trends go unaddressed?

While not every trend will apply to every organization, those who thoughtfully adapt to these shifts will gain an advantage. By embracing the trends reshaping the workplace, companies can not only attract and retain top talent but also build a resilient foundation for whatever the future holds.



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