

## Recruitsoft And BrassRing Excel In Survey Of Applicant Tracking Systems

**Recruitsoft** and **BrassRing** once again scored well with their clients in Electronic Recruiting Exchange's third annual survey of applicant tracking systems. The firms, who are widely considered marketshare leaders in selling their products to companies with 5000 or more employees, registered above average in most categories used to measure customer satisfaction. The survey found that most firms sell products that are pretty good and that they have improved over the past year.

**ER Exchange's** findings suggest that hot competition has led to improvements in applicant tracking. These systems can do more things for clients and they're usable in more languages. The vendors themselves also provide better service. "It has driven the quality of what's out there," said Ed Newman, the founder of the Philadelphia area-based **Newman Group** and a consultant for the survey. "There are a lot of really good products."

ER Exchange doesn't rank the scores of applicant tracking systems, which enable companies to find, assess and hire large numbers of people more efficiently and for less money. Nor does it make recommendations. But the New York-based company, which produces research and commentary on electronic recruiting, scores systems on a 0-4 basis in 18 categories. Both companies rated close to 3 in overall satisfaction on a scale of 0-4 – above average (excellent is a four on the survey scale). So did most of the other 14 companies participating. "Most of the companies got good feedback," said Elizabeth Saperstein, whose comp-any, **CES Research Group**, compiled the data for the report. "They're listening to customers."

The report is meant to serve as a buyer's guide for large companies who have turned to technology to cut recruiting costs and improve the quality of their hires.

Mr. Newman and other experts say no system excels in all areas yet. Some have stronger screening components for eliminating weak candidates. Others are better at coordinating the scheduling of hiring

managers, recruiters and job seekers. Still others are easier to integrate with human resource management systems from software giants **Oracle**, **PeopleSoft** and **SAP**. These systems handle such human relations-related functions as payroll accounting and employee benefits. "Contrary from what you hear from vendors, there is no end-to-end solution for the recruiting process, although this is getting closer," the ER Report concludes. "Evaluate your needs and priorities, and be sure that at a minimum the system you select can handle the most important ones."

While most observers of electronic recruiting have predicted consolidation for some time, they say there remain about 150 vendors selling applicant tracking systems. Of that number, roughly a dozen are vying seriously for clients at the upper end of the market. These vendors figure that larger accounts, which can mean millions in sales, will help them reach profitability sooner and give them a leg up in selling their products to smaller companies (ER Exchange will release a second report looking at smaller companies). The space has even attracted larger software companies that have served other areas of the human resource market, such as Oracle, PeopleSoft and SAP. Yet those companies, which provide systems for handling payroll and benefits, have yet to make a big splash in recruiting. "They're a bit behind the eight ball," said Robert Maina, an analyst for **CIBC World Markets**. "They're two or three years behind the curve."

Meanwhile, Recruitsoft and BrassRing have distanced themselves from the competition, especially Recruitsoft. The San Francisco-based company, which focuses exclusively on selling its products to large, international corporations, has more than 100 clients, says a company spokesperson — about double its total at the end of 2000. They include **Honeywell**, **BMW** and most recently, **Procter & Gamble**. A spokesperson for BrassRing said the company has contracts with about 10 percent of Fortune 500 companies. In a March report, Mr. Maina wrote "we can unequivocally state that Recruitsoft is the leading vendor in the salaried,

large employer market (at least 5000 employees)."

The survey found that Recruitsoft was better than average in all 18 categories. BrassRing scored above average in all but four categories. It lagged the average in customer service, technical support and the timeliness and cost of installing its products. But both Recruitsoft and BrassRing systems scored good to excellent in ease of use and their ability to track candidates once they've applied for a position. Recruitsoft's candidate screening, technical support and customer service were also well above average.

Both companies were also above average in their ability to customize products. That sometimes means reconciling the needs of different divisions within the same company and handling huge volumes of resumes and job openings. "One of their strengths is customer support," says Lisa Arnold, Honeywell's staffing systems analyst. "They gauge clients' needs."

Among other companies included in the survey, Westwood, Mass.-based **Deploy**, Austin, Tex.-based **Hire.com** and Jacksonville Beach, Fla.-based **Recruitmax** all scored well above average in customer satisfaction. Wayne, Pa.-based **Kenexa Recruiter** and Raleigh, N.C.-based **Peopleclick** were somewhat above average.

In last year's report, companies said a vendor's "viability" was important. With consolidation of the market still looming, that issue was still a prime concern. **iSearch** last year left several companies, including Honeywell in the lurch when it folded. In this year's report, ER Exchange sought to identify the most popular vendors, which would indicate they have enough customers to be financially stable. "Companies that are profiled are probably not going out of the business," said Ms. Saperstein. "They've spent a great deal of money on branding. They certainly have the wherewithal to stick around."