

Top 10 Things to Look for in an Applicant Tracking System

- 1 Flexibility.** You want an applicant tracking system (ATS) that can be easily configured to work within your established processes rather than force you into making compromises. Your needs should dictate the types of data captured. You should be able to customize fields, forms, and workflows, and use personalized email templates to communicate with groups or individuals. Internal job moves and external hires can both be accommodated.
- 2 Functionality.** A good ATS allows you to quickly and easily unlock its potential. It provides role-based functionality for the entire requisition-to-hire process, including applicant tracking, interviewing, offers, and reporting. The best ones integrate candidate assessment tools and direct job board posting, and can even predict which job boards will be most effective.
- 3 Affordability.** An ATS should pay for itself, reducing both time-to-hire and cost-per-hire. The most affordable systems are sized-to-fit, based on the number of users, without a lot of upfront costs to implement and configure. Subscription-based pricing will enable you to prove the effectiveness of the ATS without committing significant funding.
- 4 Usability.** Taleo's Outlook Plug-In lets you create candidate profiles, track email correspondence, and search email addresses in Taleo Business Edition without ever leaving Microsoft Outlook. What's more, it creates a seamless workflow and gives HR managers the ability to track and store hiring correspondence and profiles.
- 5 Reliability.** Take a good long look at the vendor. Are they recognized as a leader in talent acquisition management, with a list of satisfied customers to prove it? Can they deliver 99.9 percent availability, 24 x 7 x 365? Do they offer fail-safe data centers with redundant high-speed, high-volume internet bandwidth? If not, look elsewhere.
- 6 Support.** If anything goes wrong with the ATS, of course you want expert service and support to set it right again. But will your vendor's support extend beyond troubleshooting? A good vendor can offer advice on best practices, while an excellent one will help you with content assessment.
- 7 Integration.** Can the ATS be integrated with back-end systems (HRIS, financials) and other third-party applications? If so, you'll extend its effectiveness and simplify the lives of everyone involved in personnel matters.
- 8 Scalability.** If growth is your goal, you want a system that can scale with you. An ATS should be able to function as efficiently for an organization of two-thousand as for a company of twenty. It will enable you to add new business units and expand overseas.
- 9 Reporting.** Configurability should extend to reporting. Look for the ability to create custom reports that offer complete drilldown capabilities. The most effective systems will provide real-time views on any candidate, requisition, or user data.
- 10 Customer Satisfaction.** Every ATS vendor measures customer satisfaction. During your evaluation process, ask the vendor to provide you with these metrics along with online availability and implementation success rates. A customer success rate of 90 percent should be your baseline. Above 95 percent is considered outstanding.

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