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A Glance at Evolving
Talent Technologies

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Introduction

Today's employers are embracing a world of innovation to better attract and retain talent. Advances in technology help them make smarter decisions, better engage workers with in-demand skills, navigate digital channels of interaction, and stand out from competitors.

The promise of innovation also creates anxiety as companies struggle with the pace of change. A recent Allegis Group Talent Technology Innovation survey found that 98 percent of 1,000 human resources (HR) decision-makers believe talent technology shortfalls create many business challenges, from stagnant innovation and greater recruitment costs to longer hiring cycles and difficulties securing talent. Seventy-seven percent agree their organizations are not up-to-date in the use of new talent technology, and 75 percent believe their need for new talent technology puts them at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining talent. At the same time, while 92 percent of HR decision-makers say their organizations plan to increase their adoption of talent technologies over the next two years, 94 percent experience challenges in keeping up with the latest talent technology trends and developments, and 93 percent find challenges in implementing new solutions and capabilities.

To help HR decision-makers better understand the forces at play in the talent technology landscape, this report provides an overview of trends and examples of solutions influencing how companies attract and retain critical talent.[1] The report covers highlights that impact all parts of the employee lifecycle, including talent acquisition, candidate evaluation and onboarding, and employee development and retention.

Talent Attraction and Engagement

When it comes to applying the latest innovations in talent acquisition technology, employers know they have work to do. Of the HR decision-makers Allegis Group surveyed, 97 percent agree that increasing their organizations' investment in new technologies focused on talent acquisition would help them achieve their business goals. Eighty-eight percent anticipate an increase in their investment in new talent acquisition technology over the next two years. Meanwhile, among companies that have recently invested in new talent acquisition technologies, between 86 and 92 percent found adoption to be challenging. The takeaway is clear: companies are willing to weather the challenges of implementation if the result is a solution that helps them better compete for talent that is in short supply.

What follows are examples of notable developments in talent acquisition technology and related survey findings from the Allegis Group study. Areas of focus include programmatic advertising, social search, conversational artificial intelligence (AI), and automated writing analysis and optimization.

Programmatic Advertising

Programmatic advertising solutions apply software to automate the buying process for job ads. Solutions leverage electronic marketplaces, where publishers list their ad space and buyers bid for that space. Using AI, programmatic solutions arrive at agreed-upon prices and place ads in optimal locations based on user data.

These solutions provide several benefits. First, they free up recruiter time by intelligently conducting business that previously required human effort. Second, they apply analysis to optimize buying across a broad array of publishing sources, pinpointing opportunities for yielding the most responses (i.e., job seekers) from the given spend. Finally, users can quickly adjust to changing needs. AI-driven solutions are fast, analyzing large amounts of data from multiple sources that would not be practical for humans to match.

Many HR organizations use programmatic advertising today, with 39 percent of HR decision-makers in the Allegis Group survey saying the technology is used widely in their organizations. Another 36 percent are in pilot or in early adoption, and 15 percent plan to invest in it over the next two years. Looking ahead, employers can anticipate more partnerships between programmatic advertising solutions and broader talent systems such as the larger applicant tracking system (ATS) and customer relationship management (CRM) providers.

Appcast

One example of programmatic advertising for talent acquisition is Appcast. The company's publisher solution seeks to ensure that the right ad reaches the targeted candidate audience to deliver an optimized and cost-effective advertising strategy. One significant value is Appcast can charge per applicant (rather than per click), adding a level of certainty in the ad buying process.[2]
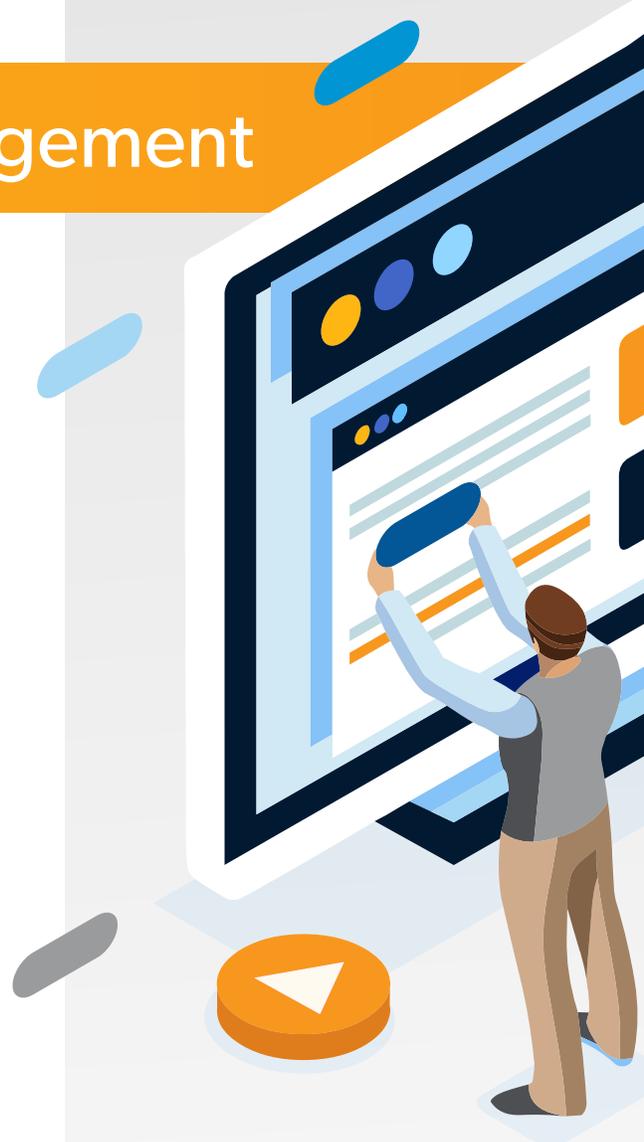
Social Search

Social search solutions automate the time-consuming research recruiters must conduct to identify and engage talent from data found across multiple sources. Incorporating AI functionality, these solutions draw from social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as internal databases, leading recruiters to candidates who align with job opportunities.

The value of social search solutions touches on key aspects of sourcing and recruiting. For example, recruiter time is optimized as the solution can explore internal or external data sources in seconds to pinpoint and rank potential talent. It also draws from a larger pool of information than a human could analyze. In addition, accuracy is highly improved over manual searches because such tools deliver results driven by AI that reflect an understanding of context and meaning. Keyword searches alone cannot achieve the same.

HR decision-makers surveyed report social search solutions are widely used by 38 percent of organizations with an additional 36 percent in pilot or early adoption, and another 15 percent plan to invest in it over the next two years. Overall, employers can look to these solutions as a critical part of the ecosystem of AI innovations that give human recruiters the power to effectively navigate an otherwise unmanageable universe of candidate sources and information.
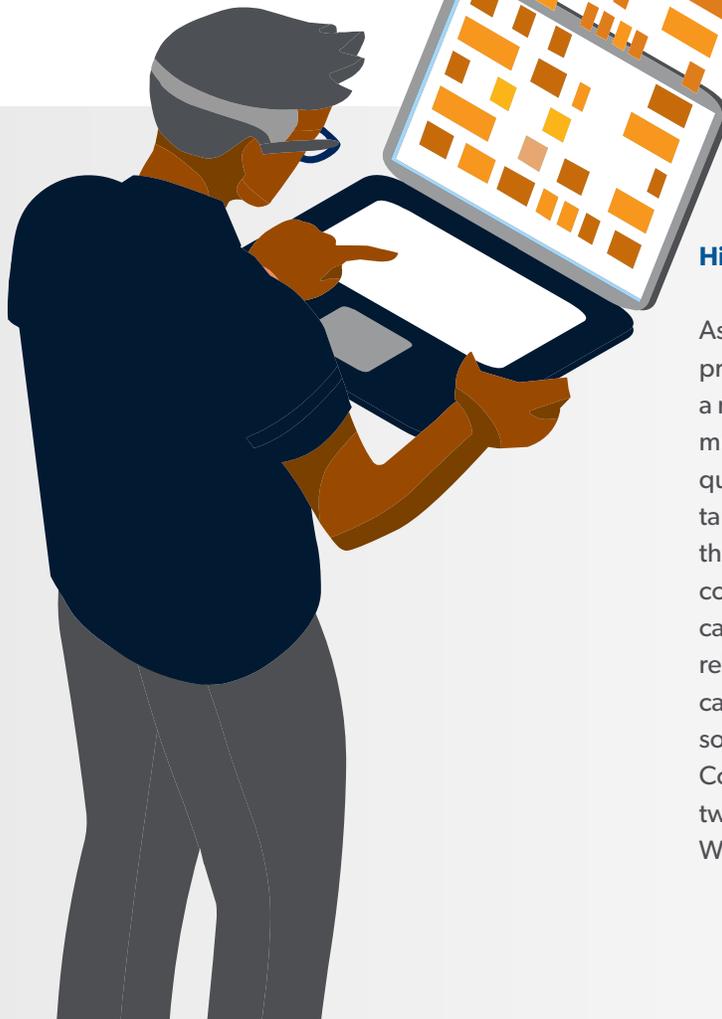
HiringSolved

As an innovator in applying AI to the search process, HiringSolved can take an inquiry from a recruiter in plain language, and then search multiple, internal and social media channels quickly and effectively to identify potential talent based on the inquiry. The recruiter can, therefore, forego complex keyword searches or commands and simply ask the solution to find a candidate. The solution ranks results according to relevance, thereby pinpointing the right potential candidates for a role amid the vast volume of social media data available today.[3] In 2019, Fast Company recognized HiringSolved as number two in the artificial intelligence sector on its World's Most Innovative Companies list.[4]

Conversational AI

Conversational AI refers to chatbots that can be present on an employer's career page and assist job seekers. These assistants can engage users in natural conversation to understand and address their questions prior to, as well as throughout, the application process.

The presence of an intelligent chatbot in the recruiting phase delivers distinct advantages. Chatbots can tackle the proverbial candidate communications black hole by providing basic interactions like status updates that keep candidates engaged. A chatbot's questions can also screen out mismatched candidates before job seekers invest unnecessary time and burden recruiters. The result is a positive, efficient experience for both the employer and the candidate.

Paradox

Paradox describes itself as the maker of an "assistive intelligence" platform, and Olivia is its main product. Olivia provides benefits to all aspects of the recruiting process, from sourcing to screening candidates and facilitating engagement along the way. The AI technology is designed to work within the talent technology ecosystem, whether integrated through an ATS platform or an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.[5]

HR decision-makers in the Allegis Group survey say conversational AI technologies are now widely used by 27 percent of organizations, with another 36 percent in early adoption or pilot phases, and 20 percent planning to adopt within the next two years. Moving forward, providers of conversational AI will likely grow through partnerships with talent solutions providers, as well as integration into broader platforms for CRM, ATS, and human capital management (HCM) systems.
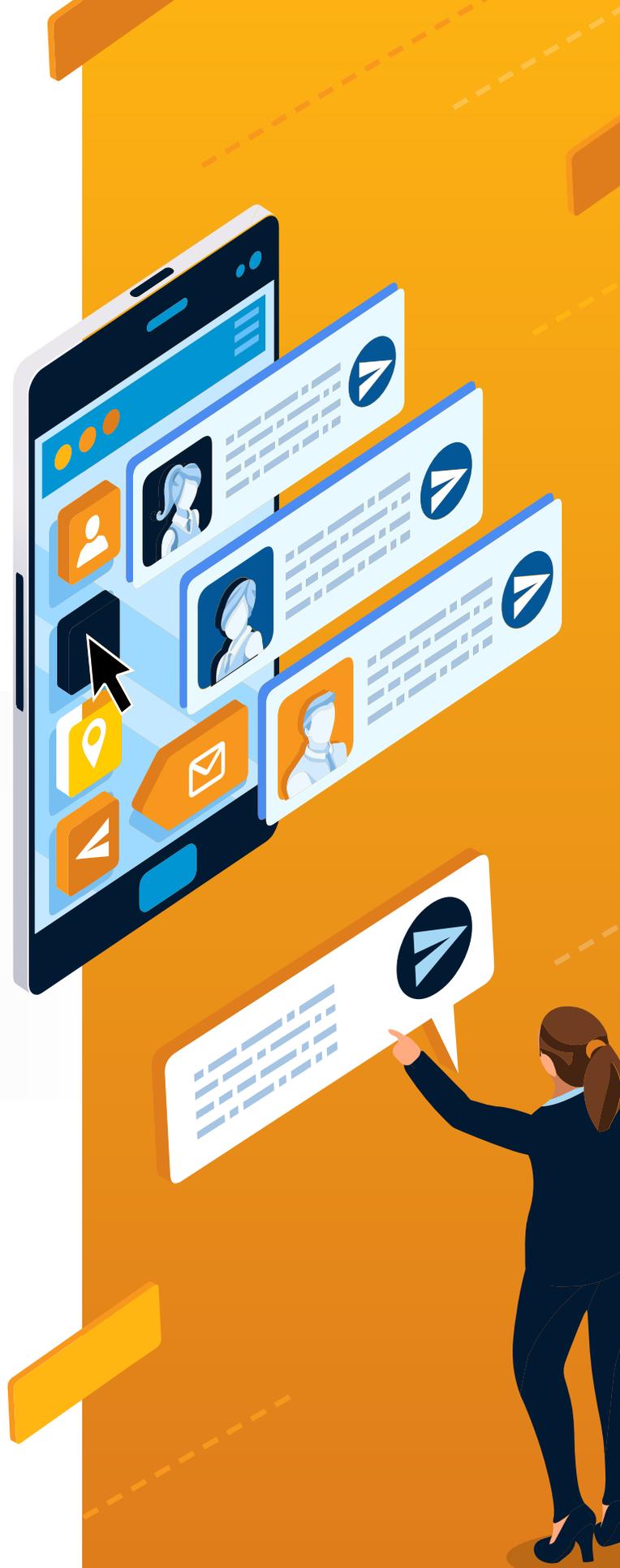
Writing Analysis

Writing analysis tools are AI-driven applications that analyze text and recommend improvements for job advertisements, emails to candidates, or other communications related to talent acquisition. Results are displayed while a user is entering text into the tool, helping recruiters refine text in real time to remove bias, better target talent, and deliver clear, compelling messages.

The benefits of an augmented writing platform center around ease of use and instant results. As one of the more elegantly simple solutions for recruiters, augmented writing checks grammar, spelling, and clarity while also applying machine learning to refine their understanding of messages that have proven effective over time.

Writing analysis and optimization capabilities are likely to continue to expand among employers, and the tools are relatively simple to incorporate into the recruiting process while leveraging powerful machine learning capability. Today, 34 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers widely use the technology within their organizations. Thirty-six percent are in pilot or early adoption, and 17 percent plan to adopt the tools within the next two years.

Textio

Textio describes itself as an augmented writing platform that instantly analyzes new job descriptions against the more than 80 million descriptions it has processed.[6] Launched in 2015, the company is on Fast Company's 2018 Most Innovative Companies list.[7] Online real estate marketplace Zillow reported a 15 percent increase in responses from candidates to recruiter messages after adopting Textio, and Johnson and Johnson saw an increase of 25 percent.[8]

Three Fundamentals Every Company Needs to Know About the Talent Acquisition Technology Marketplace

Jonathan Kestenbaum
Managing Director
Talent Tech Labs

Our talent acquisition technology advisory practice Talent Tech Labs (TTL), gives startups the resources and space to develop and launch great innovations while giving buyers the wisdom they need to build world-class talent acquisition functions.[9] In my role at TTL, I've seen what works for vendors as they develop new capabilities and what buyers want from new technology. What's evolved from this experience are three common themes that anyone looking to build a technology strategy should consider to make a positive impact on their business.

#1: Know How the Market Works

The current talent technology marketplace is doing what it has always done. Big players and platforms are growing. New classes of innovation are emerging, and multiple niche solutions are entering the market in a race to apply innovations to business problems the big players haven't yet solved. Eventually, when the market is flooded with many new solutions, consolidation occurs. Some of the startups fall out of the picture while others combine, evolve, or are acquired by the big players. Today, we see consolidation heating up with a high level of merger and acquisition (M&A) activity.

This M&A movement draws on recent trends in innovation. We've seen big data and analytics spawn a wave of new products, as well as waves of social and mobile technologies. But today, the substantial presence of AI is driving innovations that yield solutions that are smarter and more intuitive, faster, and more impactful than ever before. But that's close to being just hype. If you are considering how to move forward with your technology strategy, know that innovation will not stand still. Consider how a solution works today, and make sure you have the expert perspective to understand how it is likely to evolve in the future.

#2: Focus on the Business Problems You Can Solve

One of the biggest disconnects in talent technology is the gulf between how technology vendors describe themselves and what buyers really need. When companies turn to us to help craft a strategy or evaluate solutions, the first thing we often do is reset the conversation, from what the technology does to what business problem can be solved.

For example, consider chatbots. The rise of the chatbot has been heralded for its ability to improve the candidate experience. That may be true, but the business challenge is there are too many people at the top of the recruiting funnel and too few resources to address them. That is a problem that takes time, resources, and money to tackle. A chatbot automates the care and screening of prospective talent and can turn a high-quantity talent pool into a high-quality talent pool, hopefully at a fraction of the time and cost of human care. That's a real business problem being solved by technology, and buyers must be able to see that. It's the *why* of their investment, not the *what*, that matters most.

#3: Avoid the One-Problem, One-Solution Trap

Finally, when considering how solutions evolve, buyers need to understand that talent technology is a market that does not behave the way we always want. It's messy because there is not a simple lineup of one technology for each problem being solved. Several different areas of innovation address such needs. For example, improving diversity in hiring includes sourcing tools that reach new sources of talent, and it may involve solutions that remove bias triggers from resumes or job descriptions, or screening tools that improve objectivity in the evaluation process.

Likewise, many vendors can offer variations of similar capabilities (e.g., the chatbot), and many offer different angles at addressing a common problem (e.g., diversity in recruiting). An expert partner can help companies secure the right solutions for their specific need without buying two tools to do one job.

Get the Right People in Your Corner

Companies can turn to organizations like TTL to help them navigate the changing talent technology choices before them, or they can rely on other external partners, whether solutions providers or independent consultants. That type of partnership provides the objective influence to arrive at practical strategies that reflect the changing technology market, focus on business challenges, and avoid the pitfalls of over-simplification.

Questions That Shape a People-First Technology Strategy

Sinead O'Brien

Executive Director of People
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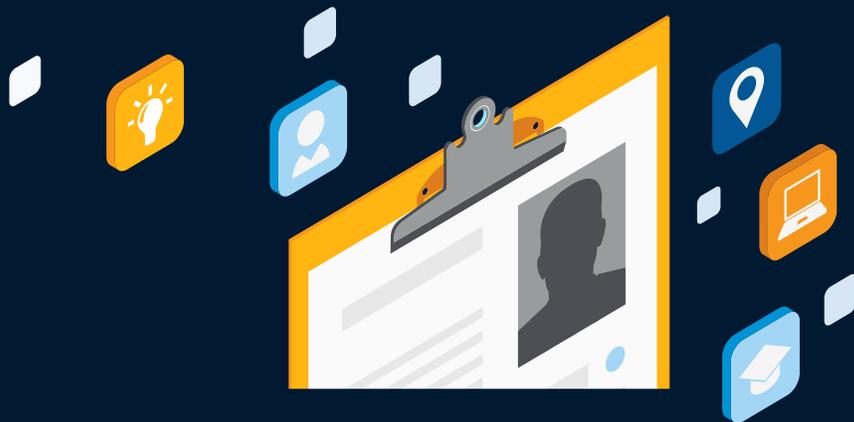
Innovation plays a considerable role in the success of our client solutions in EMEA and around the world, and it influences every facet of our internal operation. When it comes to advances in technology, we cannot afford to take the value of innovation for granted. As a successful global enterprise, we understand that a solution must put people first to deliver a lasting impact. With that in mind, the lessons of experience underscore three questions that can help an organization align their technology strategy to empower the people it was meant to serve.

Have You Addressed the Hidden "Pitfalls"?

New solutions are implemented in order to improve the employee experience and business processes; however, they can come with some challenges. For example, a new CRM platform can fail to recognize past candidate data, information can be lost, or a new email platform might treat communications as spam. All this can result in the opposite of improving the employee experience and can lead to frustration and time-wasting. If employees are going to embrace a solution, the company will need to identify and address those challenges early in the implementation and before going live to all users. That's why patience, user testing, and a focused vetting process are essential to a successful rollout of any solution.

Will the User be Able to Win Now?

Even if a new solution works the way it is intended, it may still provide a poor user experience. For example, a new CRM or ATS may impose a more complicated data entry process that makes an employee's workload more, not less, difficult. Even with the promise that a system will have a positive impact in the future, users will be critical. So ask, "How will the technology help people do their jobs better, faster, and easier today?" The successful employer will know the answer to that question and ensure it's communicated to employees.

Does Your Technology Impact People Where and How They Work?

We are a global business with offices in cities all over the world. Technology has enabled our employees to have face-to-face meetings with colleagues in other countries. The flexibility of mobile has also enabled our employees to determine where they will conduct those meetings. Employees of all ages expect to use any solution or access any system on their phones. They want to hold meetings virtually and perform data-related tasks wherever and however they see fit. They want to interact anywhere, anytime. Likewise, access to people and resources through a single system is essential, and results should be immediate. We need to enable our population of men and women to engage with one another and their work over their mobile phones. People make friends, buy houses, shop for groceries, and go to the doctor through their mobile devices, and the experience is quick and easy. An employer similarly needs to embrace that type of consumer experience as a standard for the employee, as well.

Putting it all Together

Whether an organization is adding a feature or implementing a new platform, the technology involved will only be as good as the people using it. Putting people first means the rollout and launch of the technology must be exactly right. Leaders and proponents must be able to explain the why behind the innovation. The case for using it must be powerful, and users must understand what's in it for them. Put the technology ahead of the people, and the organization risks losing value on its investment. Tackle the people-first approach instead, and the technology investment will translate to a real advantage for the individuals using it and for the business as a whole.

Evaluation <u>and</u> Onboarding

Today, employers are focusing on technology innovations to assess candidates in ways that are easy, compelling, unbiased, predictive, and, in some ways, fun. They also seek a consistent onboarding process to ensure workers start on the right foot for maximum employee engagement. In fact, 96 percent of HR decision-makers in the Allegis Group survey agree that increasing their organization's investment in new talent evaluation, selection, and onboarding technologies would help them achieve their business goals, and 85 percent anticipate their investment in related technology to increase over the next two years.

This section explores notable developments in technology for candidate screening and onboarding. Areas of focus include video assessments, unbiased screening tools, competitive challenge assessments, and automated onboarding solutions.

Video Assessments

For several years, video assessment platforms have allowed employers to move the interview online to eliminate needs related to travel and scheduling. The video platform today can also incorporate more advanced assessment solutions, such as game-based assessments and coding contests.

The use of machine learning is now part of the video interviewing environment. Such a solution can analyze video interviews and help identify candidates with the right skills. By applying data-driven capabilities to assess verbal interaction within candidate interviews, a video assessment can speed up the candidate journey with fast, objective analysis.

Video assessments that automate the analysis of candidate video responses add a new dimension to established interviewing technology. Currently, 34 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers report their organizations widely use the technology with another 35 percent in pilot or early adoption. Sixteen percent plan to adopt the tools within the next two years. Looking ahead, employers should expect to see the increased application of AI to detect expressions during interviews and more use of screen sharing to evaluate candidate skills.[10]
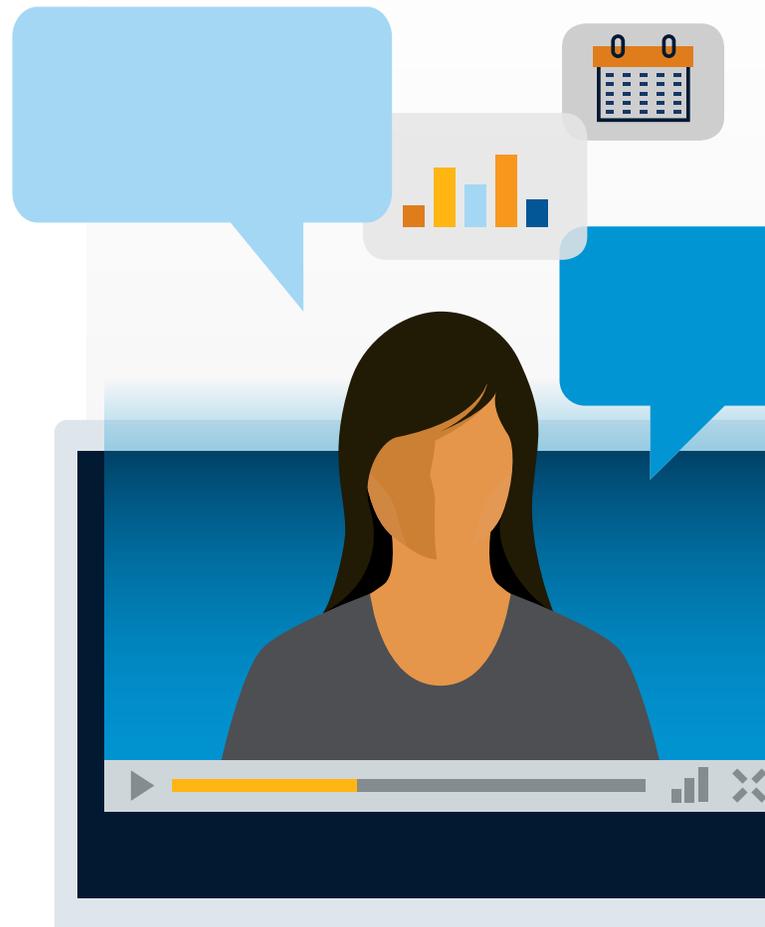
HireVue

Launched in 2008, HireVue is a global provider of video assessment technology. The company's platform began with basic video interviewing capability. It has since evolved to include assessments that leverage AI and game-based functions to collect candidate data and provide objective, detailed, results. HireVue is one of the Forbes top 10 "Most Promising Companies" in America and a five-time winner of HR Executive Magazine's "Top HR Product of the Year."[11]

Bias-Free Screening

Bias-fighting solutions are designed to improve the sourcing and screening process to boost diversity in the candidate pool. They do this by eliminating the natural triggers to unconscious bias that are inherent in job descriptions, resume data, and human interaction. While no solution is proven to be 100 percent effective at eliminating bias, progress continues to be made in this area.

Examples of bias include language in job descriptions that may be gender-specific or the unconscious tendency of hiring managers to overlook applicants for roles based on gender or ethnicity. A recent study found that minority job seekers are twice as likely to receive callbacks from employers if they delete references to their ethnic background.[12] Bias-fighting solutions help companies work around these selection tendencies by drawing candidates from diverse sources and removing bias from the language of job postings, candidate information, communications and assessment results.

With unconscious bias as a common obstacle to diverse hiring, companies are turning to advances in technology to help solve the issue. Today, 37 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers report their organizations widely use tools for reducing bias in screening, and 34 percent are in earlier stages of adoption or in a pilot program. Another 18 percent plan to invest in new technologies over the next two years. Continued advances in the technology for analyzing candidate data and learning from hiring decisions will make bias-fighting features a part of more screening processes for employers across industries.

Blendoor

Launched in 2015, Blendoor describes itself as an AI and people analytics provider that mitigates unconscious bias in hiring. The platform delivers anonymized views of new applicants by removing bias-triggering information, and it can identify weak points where bias may influence an organization's recruiting process.[13]
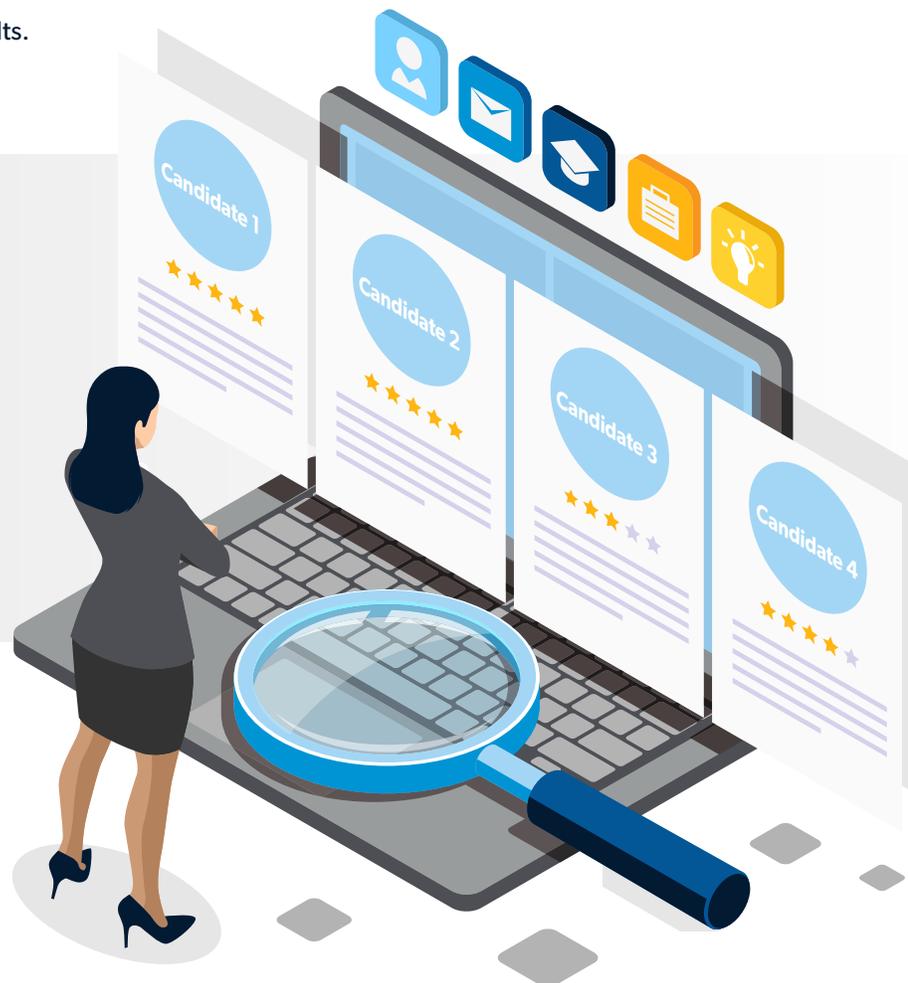
Competitive Challenge Assessments

Often, the best way to evaluate candidates is to give them a challenge where they can apply their skills and then compare their results against other applicants. This approach is most well-known as a way for developers to test their programming skills, but it is also used for things like customer service, editing/writing, math or typing skills, and more. For example, programming challenges evaluate developers by having them practice their craft to solve assigned problems. The solutions analyze the code submitted by a participant and provide a score that ranks the quality of results.

In this example, the benefits of competitive challenges lie in their ability to deliver a real-world assessment of how qualified a developer may be. Their results not only verify whether a programmer has a certain skill set, but they also provide detailed insight into whether those skills include basic knowledge or more advanced practical capability. Likewise, applicants often approach such coding challenges with a competitive energy that a traditional skills assessment may not inspire.

The use of competitive challenges will likely expand as their acceptance and credibility evolve and attract more users. Today, 34 percent of HR decision-makers report their organizations' widespread use of such challenges in screening, and another 35 percent are currently in a pilot or in the early stages of adoption. Moving forward, another 15 percent plan to begin using the resource within the next two years.

HackerRank

As a provider of skills challenges to technical talent around the world, HackerRank has more than five million developers on its platform and serves more than 1,100 customers. The solution helps organizations identify developers early in the screening process, provides relevant challenges including customized scenarios, and assesses an applicant against other candidates.[14]
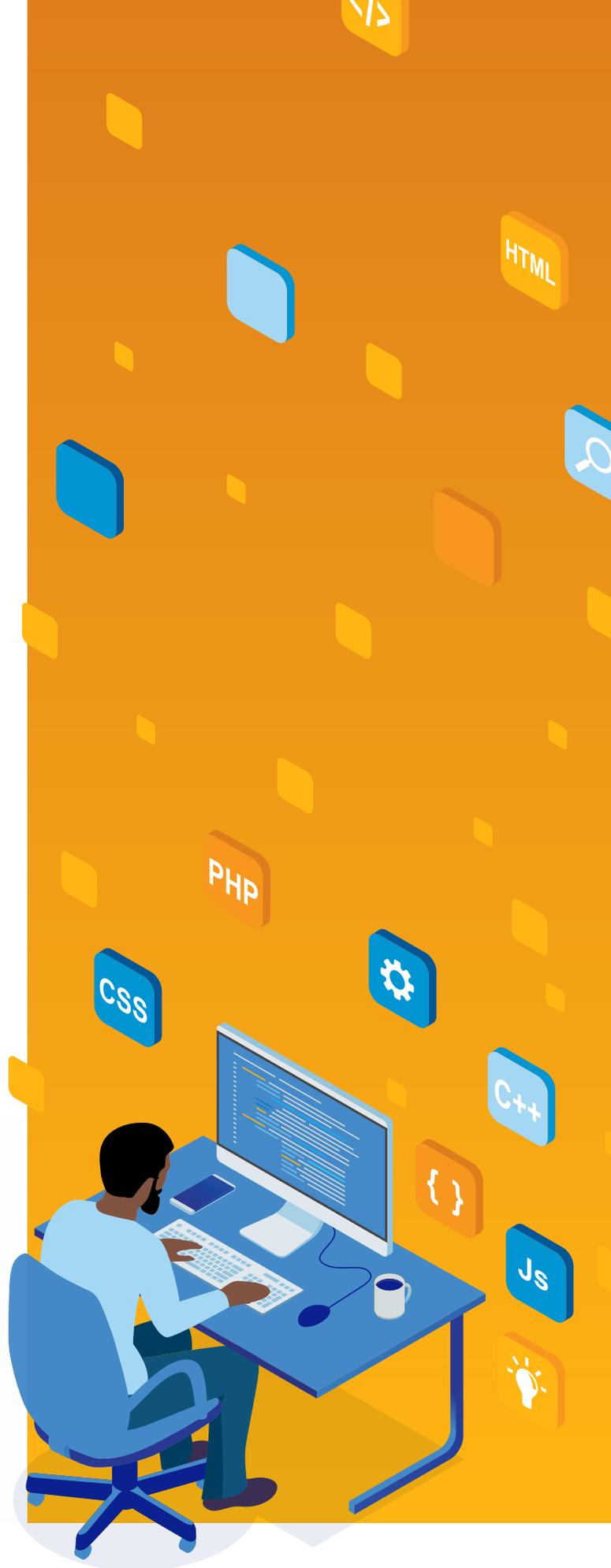
Automated Onboarding

Innovations for onboarding new hires serve both the hiring manager and the employee through an automated communication platform. By putting the communications, forms, reminders, and other interactions into a consistent process that pushes all information to the right people at the right time, the employer can turn the first days on the job into an experience that promotes employee engagement.

The benefits of automated onboarding include flexibility of communication and consistency of process. Interactions can occur through any media, most notably mobile devices. Elements in the onboarding process, whether reminders to hiring managers to contact the new hire's colleagues or the delivery of an IT or payroll form to the employee, can be pushed to the respective parties at predetermined times to create a smooth experience.

Automated onboarding is in wide use by 35 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers' organizations and in early stages of adoption or pilot programs by another 35 percent. Eighteen percent plan to adopt the technology within the next two years. The historically unreliable and cumbersome manual onboarding process is ripe for improvement, and today's innovations are finally rising to the challenge.

Enboarder

The Enboarder platform provides a modular framework for building a customized onboarding workflow that aligns to each new hire's needs. The technology pushes communications to the new hire and the hiring manager, rather than relying on users to sign in to check for updates. The platform also offers hiring manager support, with coaching and reminders to keep the process moving efficiently.[15]
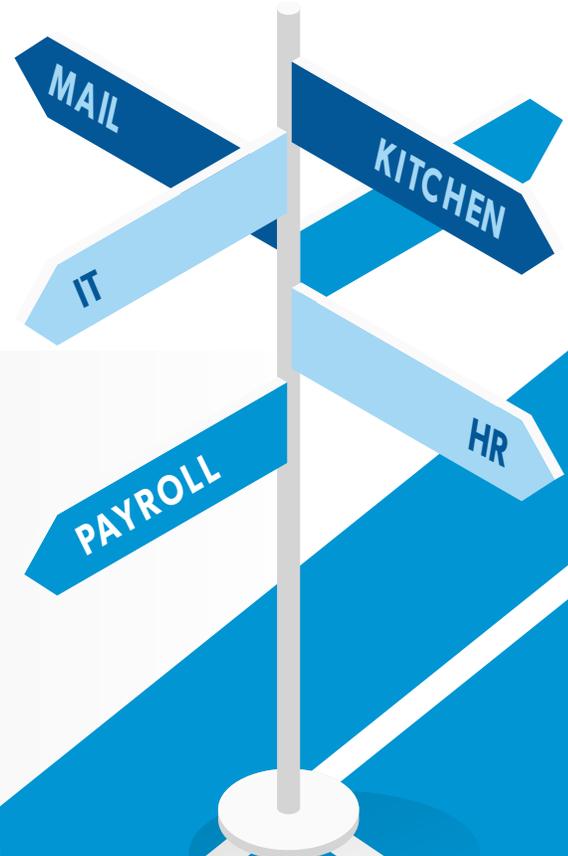
Recognize the Fundamentals of User Adoption

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When it comes to realizing the value of any IT investment, user adoption is everything. Without the people to put innovation to work, the benefits and impact of any system or feature are limited at best. Realizing the full value of any technology requires effective implementation and project execution. Yet, according to a Forrester Research study, lack of user adoption is cited as the primary cause for 70 percent of failed projects.[16] These figures apply to all types of IT projects, and talent technology is no exception.

For employers, the time and budget at stake for even a minor addition to the talent technology stack makes user adoption a priority, and simply hoping for the best is not enough. An active approach to addressing common user-adoption fundamentals can ensure a technology innovation delivers on its promise of user value and impact for the business. Accordingly, there are three top priorities in building user adoption: context, champions, and reinforcement.

Context Creates Commitment

A successful user training effort involves more than showing people the tools and features of a technology product. In fact, users are unlikely to care how tools and features work if they do not first understand the "why" behind the technology and what is in it for them. It's a fact that seems obvious, but organizations frequently devote only the most basic amount of time and training to educate users about a product, leaving them unconvinced that it will make their lives better.

To better reinforce user buy-in, deliver training that is contextual. Go beyond teaching how to use technology; instead, provide the big picture promise that drove the organization to invest in the new tools. For example, teach recruiters not just how to use a new search feature of a database but also why to use that feature first before using other tools. Focus not only on skills but on building their confidence and belief in the new system or tool and how it will help them do their jobs better.

Champions Pave the Path to Success

For employees, adopting and using technology is a leap of faith. That's because they don't know that a new solution is going to make their work easier until they experience the results for themselves. If inputting data into a new system becomes too burdensome, they may resort to workarounds, using Excel as their personal database or going back to old means of getting work done. The old, familiar way may be slow, but at least it's a sure thing. That's why a user champion is so important to facilitating the adoption of new technology.

The visible presence of a super-user and technology champion provides a vital bridge to engagement for everyone involved. That champion is different than the executive sponsor. It could be someone working
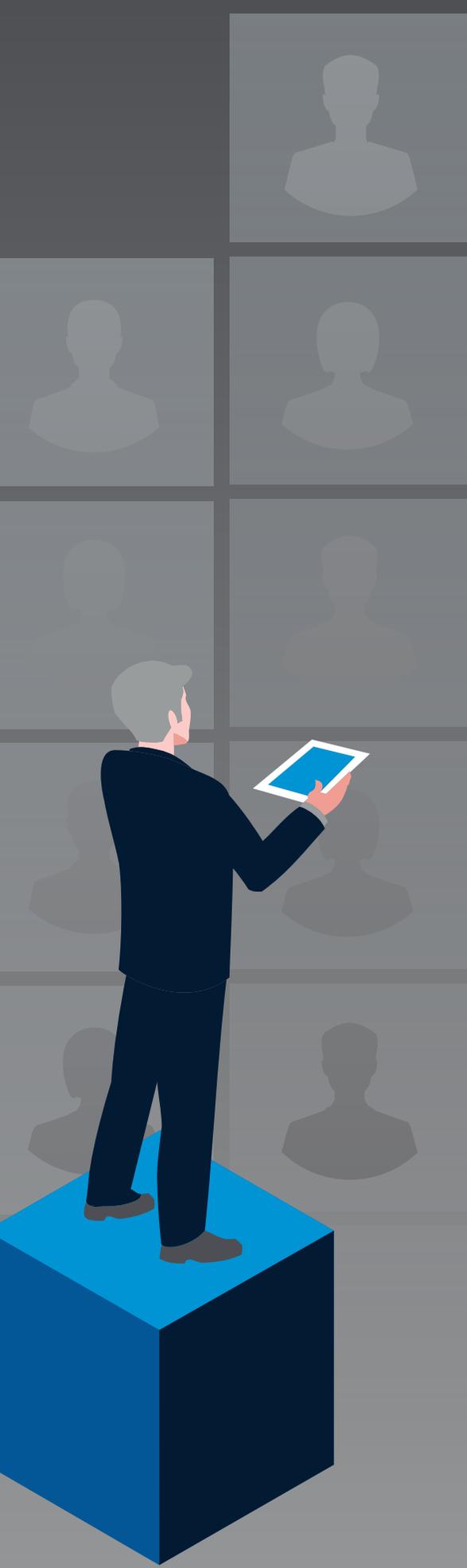
side-by-side with those using the technology, or it could be a manager of those impacted by the new system. That person listens to the users, hears their fears and doubts, and relays daily the how's and why's behind the technology, enabling users to keep on the path to adoption.

Reinforcement Connects the Human Side of Technology
People don't learn like machines. People absorb knowledge. They put it into practice. They have every intention to change how they do their critical tasks. Then they forget. Not surprisingly, user training that is treated as a one-time event soon loses its impact. Unfortunately, many enterprises perform only one round of training and overlook the need for ongoing learning and reinforcement. The better approach is to include these two critical components as an integral part of the user adoption strategy.

When we work with companies to drive successful implementations, we include reinforcement as part of the strategy, such as self-service job aids, performance support, training materials, and tools to enable users to practice. We measure and manage performance to celebrate strengths, then identify and address new training requirements. Finally, ongoing support in many cases involves the expansion of user skills to include knowledge of new features or additional applications of existing tools.

Putting the Adoption Picture into Place
No two technology implementations are exactly alike, so employers should avoid a cookie-cutter approach to training and user adoption. In my experience helping companies start on the right foot or save troubled initiatives, an intentional focus on training and user adoption has a critical, positive influence on success. Employers would do well to partner with someone who not only understands the technology at play but also has broad experience in their industry and its processes. Don't lose sight of the business value and objectives at stake. The purpose of the technology isn't to put new features to use; it's to give people the power to do their jobs better.

Employee Development and Retention

Retaining and empowering employees is critical amid changing workforce needs as their development can bring vital, new skills to the organization. At the same time, current employees' opinions about their employers can shape a company's reputation, and that reputation influences the company's ability to acquire new talent.

Companies are recognizing the importance of technology in the employee experience as 95 percent of HR decision-makers in the Allegis Group survey agree that increasing their organization's investment in new technologies associated with employee development and retention would help them achieve their business goals. A full 85 percent anticipate that their organizations' investment in technology in this area will increase over the next two years.

The developments in technologies associated with managing and retaining employees are complex and wide-ranging. To help better understand the innovations that focus on the employee experience, this section of the report explores several areas that are of value to development and retention, including microlearning, learning experience platforms, employee assistants, employee engagement platforms, and analytics for predicting turnover and reducing attrition.

Microlearning

Microlearning is an approach to development that focuses on training the user to achieve a single outcome in a quick, easily digestible portion of information and activity. Sizable learning objectives may be supported by a series of modules, or an employee may have access to microlearning to overcome specific challenges as they encounter them (e.g., creating a new spreadsheet or opening a certain type of document). Typically, this type of training is delivered in short, digital video modules that may include gamified content for a compelling user experience.

The benefits of microlearning are ease of access, immediate and practical outcomes, and the ability to put the employee in control. Microlearning is available on-demand, online, and through mobile devices. It is proving highly useful for delivering continuous learning opportunities to employees without imposing on their daily work activity.

Microlearning will continue to have a large presence in the employee development technology ecosystem. Today, 34 percent of HR decision-makers report widespread use of these technologies in their organizations, and 37 percent are in pilot or early adoption phases. Sixteen percent plan to adopt microlearning into their employee development and retention programs over the next two years.

Trivie

Trivie represents an advanced learning technology that incorporates advances in learning science, AI-driven adaptive learning, and gamification. The company's solution lets employers organize modules around a workflow that adapts to the employee's learning style and needs, with the goal of pushing repeatable, strategically spaced modules, including trivia-style word games and flashcards to enhance recall through repetition and reinforcement.[17]
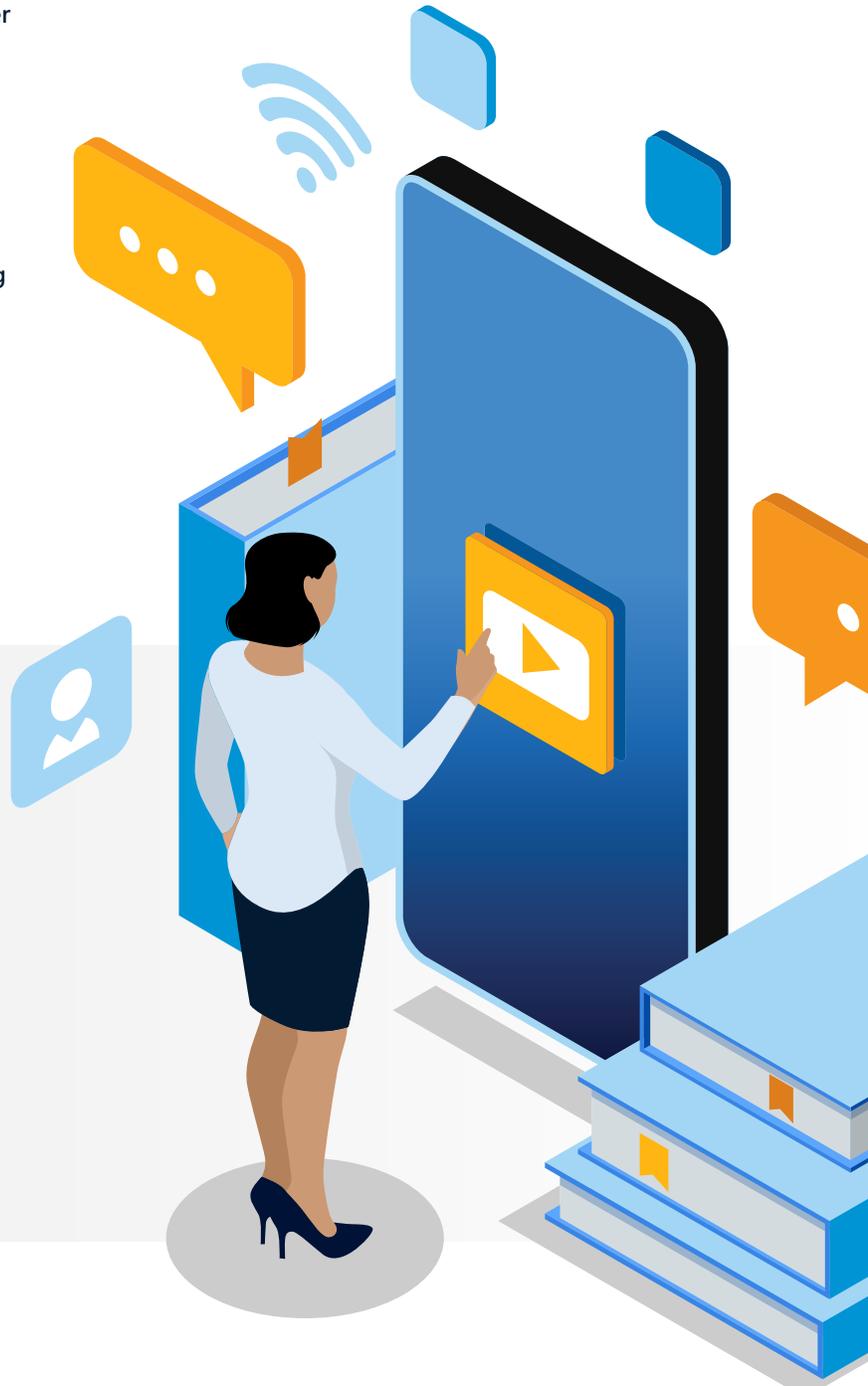
Learning Experience Platforms

A learning experience platform (LXP) is the modern iteration of the learning management system (LMS). Unlike the LMS, which serves as a static repository of resources for employees to access through a company system, the LXP allows users to interact with each other and add resources, which can then be seen and accessed by all users on the platform. The system curates content from traditional corporate learning courses and modules, as well as resources from social media and the internet.

LXPs are less constrained by corporate management than their LMS counterparts as they are constantly taking on new content. This distinction makes the LXP a compelling resource that encourages employees to return more often than mandated corporate training modules. The LXP may not replace the LMS, but its dynamic nature makes the LXP an ideal resource for employees to continuously expand their skills and knowledge at the same speed that new information, skills, and learning needs appear in the market.[18]

Today, 35 percent of HR decision-makers report widespread use of an LXP within their organizations, with another 37 percent in pilot or early stages of adoption, and 16 percent planning to implement the technology in their organizations within the next two years. In the future, companies will likely continue to embrace LXPs as a complement to their LMS systems, providing a dynamic environment where learning content is continually added.

Valamis

Valamis is a digital learning company with a flagship LXP that is continuing to expand the resources connected to its platform. The platform boasts thousands of courses, cloud storage, and integration with systems such as Google Drive, Dropbox, and Microsoft Office 365. Features include a digital assistant that actively pushes suggestions to users based on their learning effort, modules to support on-the-job training with real-time feedback, mobile learning with push notifications, and personalized microlearning supported by a digital AI assistant.[19]

Innovation at Work: Career Path Tools Boost Employer-Talent Relationships

Neil Cains
Chief Technology Officer, Innovation Lab
Allegis Group

Building relationships of trust with employees is one of the employer's most critical and often-overlooked tasks. Trust means knowing your employer is looking out for you. It means understanding that your company is giving you the means to succeed in your current role and the path to succeed in the future. Our Innovation Lab approaches its work knowing technology can help companies forge better talent relationships, and one of the most exciting developments we're pursuing is career path development.

A Solution That Peers into Real Career Options

Through our innovation function, we have created a career path mapping tool that applies advanced data science and cloud computing capabilities to visualize potential career development options. The user, whether a job seeker, an employee, or the employee's manager, can input current job information and a desired career objective. The tool applies algorithms to a large database of worker information, job descriptions, and histories to outline potential paths of advancement along with estimated timelines.

As an example, someone in an early-level marketing role may aspire to be a chief marketing officer. That role no longer necessarily requires a direct path of advancement through the manager, director, and vice president of marketing roles. The solution can provide a choice of several tracks, whether through a combination of product roles, sales, or other functions within the company. Employees can then have candid conversations about where they would like to move in their next steps, what kind of training and development they need, and where opportunities exist within the organization to move forward.

A Relationship-Building Advantage for Employers

This development tool is becoming more important as today's workers find themselves navigating a complex array of skills demands, new opportunities, or broad career development paths. For employers, it can help reduce attrition, particularly among motivated high-performers who often don't adhere to traditional routes of advancement. On a deeper level, the solution provides a fundamental advantage in building relationships by demonstrating the employer's commitment to the worker's success.

Beyond providing employees with long-term planning guidance, a career path solution can also help recruiters deliver more strategic value to prospective candidates.

A Resource in the Worker's Corner

The career path solution is a great example of how companies can apply technology in a way that gives employees a resource on their side. The solution represents the individual, not the company, but the results benefit everyone involved. Many people don't know what the next best step would be in their career. Many don't realize there are parallel tracks toward achieving the same goal. By shedding light on the journey and taking away some of the guesswork, the career path solution will play a growing role in reinforcing the employee relationship of the future.

Employee Assistants

Employee assistants are AI chatbots that provide workers with the guidance they need to tackle the challenges of finding people, locating resources, navigating administrative processes, and other common workplace issues. The assistant may help complete an HR form, track down a presentation, field an HR question, schedule meetings, or point the employee in the right direction to find an answer to a difficult question.

Employee assistants extend the self-service capability of workers, helping to quickly solve issues that previously consumed large amounts of time and productivity. The assistant can understand requests and questions, and it can often respond with near immediate results for simple tasks. Increased productivity, less wasted time, and higher job satisfaction are all advantages offered by the technology.

Employee assistant chatbots are well on the way to adoption, with 34 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers reporting wide use of the technology by their companies. Another 35 percent report early stage adoption or are in a pilot, and 16 percent plan to implement the technology within another two years. Moving forward, AI assistants will continue to grow in use as companies discover the value of a tool that can better anticipate user needs and help employees navigate the challenging, complex world of enterprise data and systems.

Zoom.ai

The Zoom.ai chat-based productivity tool is an AI-based, automated virtual assistant. Zoom.ai learns user preferences and can handle needs related to scheduling, logistics, searching for files, and generating documents. As an example, recruiters endure a lot of back and forth emailing to schedule meetings with job candidates. With Zoom.ai, however, recruiters can offload meeting scheduling to the virtual assistant and chat with them using natural language within common platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams.[20]

Employee Engagement Platforms

An employee engagement platform ensures that employees are aligned to goals, can recognize peers, and know that others see their appreciation. Innovations in the area center around ease of access through cloud technology, innovative use of rewards, and social capability.

Engagement platforms offer several benefits. Today's technology enables recognition, by leaders, managers, or peers, anytime and anywhere, so even the smallest acts can be acknowledged. Likewise, traditional manager-driven, top-down gratitude is replaced by a more extensive social system where employees directly recognize each other. Finally, the platform provides analytics and reporting to reveal levels of engagement and activity, capabilities that traditional programs cannot deliver.

Employee engagement and recognition technologies are now in wide use by organizations, as reported by 37 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers. Thirty-five percent are in early stages of utilization or are piloting a program, and another 16 percent plan to adopt the technology within two years. As companies continue to reinforce employee relationships and boost engagement, they will turn to platforms that make appreciation a two-way interaction, with employees directly influencing recognition as much as leadership has done in the past.

Achievers

Achievers is an employee engagement platform that features a robust and innovative reward and recognition solution. Cloud access to the solution enables participation, anytime and anywhere. The platform includes social access to features, including a point system for giving and receiving recognition, awards, and a one-click system that makes usage easy for any employee.[21]
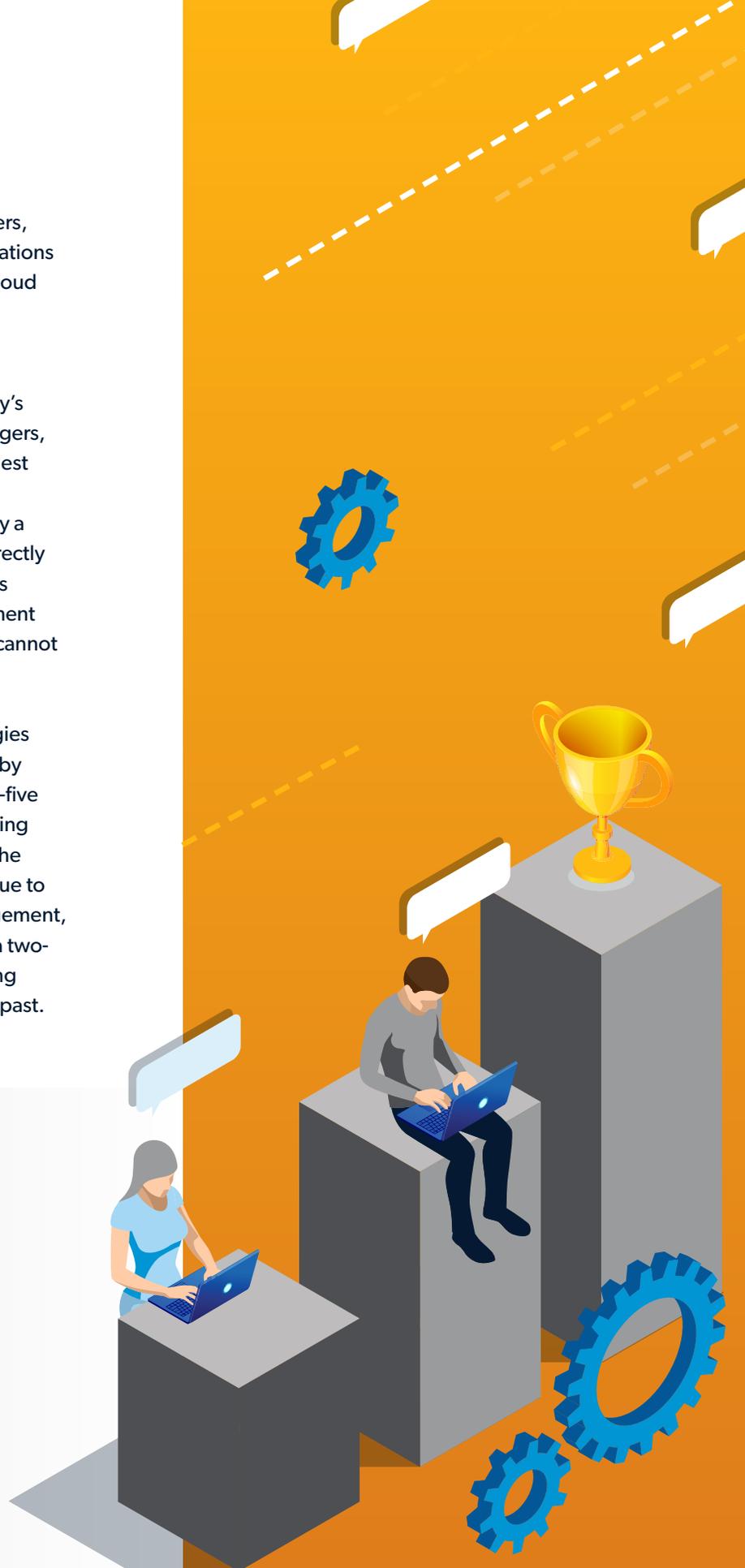
Turning Visibility into Opportunity:
An Advantage for Employees and Flexible Workers

Steve Parker
Head of Product and Technology, QUANTUM
Allegis Global Solutions

Missed opportunities are one of the biggest challenges to career advancement, and employers are feeling the impact. Lacking visibility into vacancies within an enterprise, employees leave the organization for new offers. Likewise, full-time, contingent workers, and contractors often start looking for their next gig in other companies because they are unaware that their services are needed in another division or location within their current employer.

The culprits behind these missed opportunities are silos of data that provide limited visibility into opportunities for employees or current contractors. Often, once someone becomes employed by an organization, the only information about the worker is tucked away in the HR system. As a result, a hiring manager for a new assignment or vacancy may never be aware of the person's availability or qualification. If you are a contractor, you are only seen through the VMS, and if you are a freelancer, your digital presence may only be in the payroll system that processes your check. In other words, if you're a worker, you're invisible to managers who may need your services.

Bridging the Silos of Talent
To stay engaged with the employer, flexible workers want a system to provide visibility to managers and opportunities, and that's a problem we're helping companies solve on an enterprise scale. The solution, delivered through our QUANTUM strategy and technology platform, gives non-employee workers, recruiters, and managers a view to all opportunities across a company, and it gives managers a look into the flexible talent at work in their organization. For example, knowing the end-date of their project is approaching in several months, workers can check the system to see what opportunities are available in other areas, giving them a chance to book their next gig without looking outside the current employer.

For the manager, QUANTUM solves the visibility problem by intelligently organizing talent. The hiring manager can search and match across the entire enterprise. The system provides access to available people, as well as insight on the work that needs to be done. It's not always about connecting one professional to one role. It could be a project that requires two contractors, a contingent worker, and two full-time or traditional employees. Through the system, recruiters or managers can assess the body of work to accomplish and then look at the whole pool of available talent to arrive at a solution.

The Employer Vision: From Job Provider to Career Ecosystem
Moving forward, platforms such as QUANTUM will likely become an anticipated part of the employee and flexible worker experience, where workers can start treating employers as an ecosystem of career opportunities rather than the provider of a single job. The employer that doesn't step up to this expectation will likely lose workers who move to employers that do. Career mapping, success planning, skills development, and matching all forms of work to all forms of talent — it's all part of the vision of a truly connected employee experience. By eliminating the silos of data and barriers to opportunity, we are bringing that vision to life.

Flight-Risk Analytics

Employee retention innovations include technologies that capitalize on the vast volume of data generated by an employee's activity, while applying analytics to track engagement levels and predict when an employee is considering leaving the organization. Using the data, the employer can address the contributing factors to the employee's inclination or provide open communication to help influence the employee to stay.

By enlisting data in this way, companies can identify issues early, pinpoint gaps in employee engagement, and measure all aspects of the situation, including estimated costs of replacement. From predicting flight risks to identifying top performers and determining where engagement can be improved for all employees, the intelligence provided by data and AI capabilities helps companies be more specific and intentional in their approach to the employee experience.

Technologies for addressing potential turnover are now cited for being in wide use by 36 percent of surveyed HR decision-makers' companies. Thirty-five percent are in early stages of utilization or pilots, and 16 percent plan to adopt the technology within another two years. In the future, employers can expect further innovations in HCM platforms to turn employee data and predictive analytics into an increasing variety of actionable insights, from identifying potential leaders to establishing career paths.

Ceridian

Ceridian is the provider of Dayforce, a cloud-based, HCM software platform that captures data and provides insights across multiple functions, including payroll, HR, benefits, workforce management, and talent management. Dayforce applies machine learning algorithms to employee-generated data and identifies the drivers of voluntary turnover that may require action from managers. Flight-risk analytics are updated daily, and the tool tracks all contributors to the employee experience, including the role, performance percentile, tenure, and other contributing factors. In addition to identifying risks, the solution also guides managers with tips for coaching.[22]
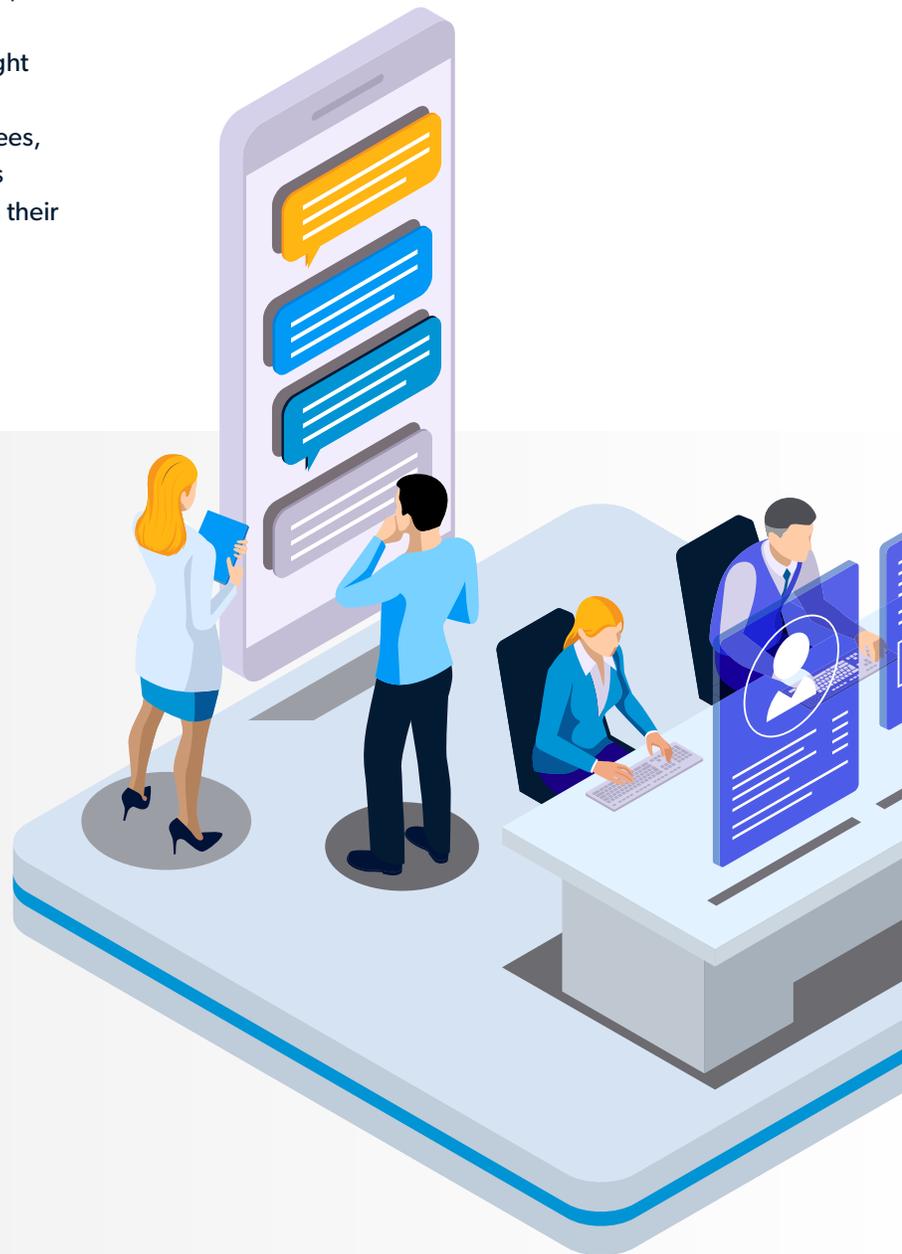
Conclusion:

Technology Will Continue to Reshape Talent Acquisition

The push for innovation in talent technology will continue as employers strive to grow and succeed in a world where workers with critical skills are scarce, and the competition for those employees is high. Advances in technology will follow well-established themes that reappear in the stories behind solutions in all phases of the talent lifecycle, from talent acquisition to employee performance. Those themes point to a universal message: technology, more than ever, must deliver on its promise to make work more human.

Moving forward, the winners in the race for innovation will be the employers that adopt technologies aimed at empowering candidates and employees. Recruiters will continue to become less burdened by rote tasks and piles of resumes, and more empowered to focus on caring for the candidates and hiring managers they bring together. Candidates will spend less time cutting and pasting information in form fields and more time interacting with the people who may eventually employ them. Employees will spend less time looking for answers and more time getting work done. For employers and workers alike, innovation promises a brighter, more human future.

Endnotes

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