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# Candidate Experience and Assessment

Insights 2022

Welcome to our Insights Reports for 2022

We are now in our 11th year of running our annual research reports. The purpose of these reports is to provide the industry with insight on candidate behaviours and employer trends to help guide organisations when planning for the new recruitment season in our ever-changing world of Early Talent. This year we will have 3 key reports covering the main trends:

- **Attraction Insights**
- **Diversity and Inclusion Insights**
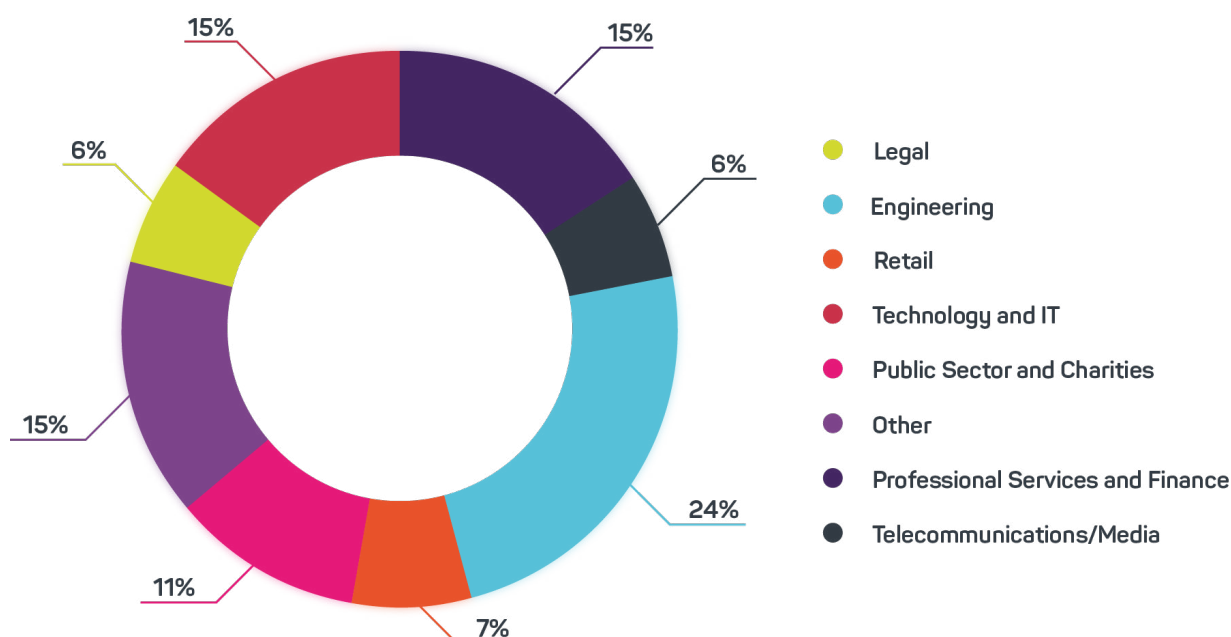- **Assessment and Candidate Experience Insights**

Overview of Data

We've pulled the data for the reports from the latest 2021/22 recruitment season. This year we've had responses from 95 employers, across 30 sectors. We've also analysed over 300,000 candidate applications, providing us with an extremely robust data set for review.

95 Employer Responses	30 Sectors	300,000 candidate applications	Applications 2021/22 season
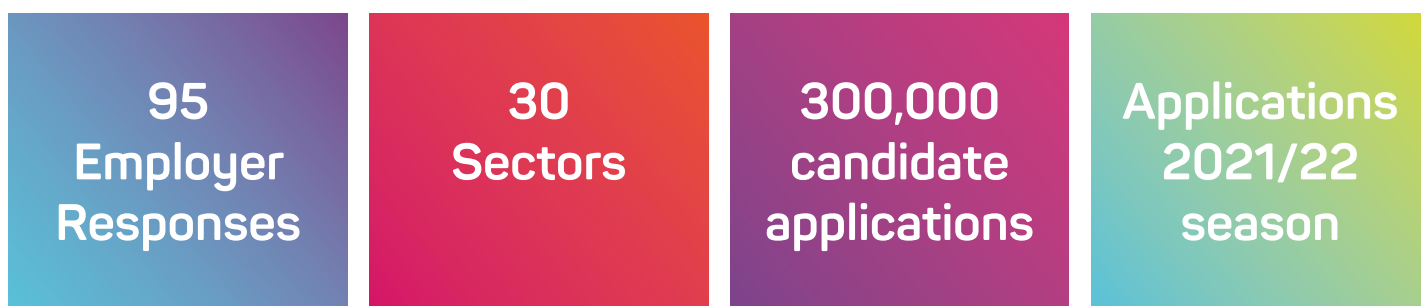
We collated data for both the Graduate and Apprentice market. Due to the data being very similar, especially from the employer survey we've combined the results to provide overall themes. Where there are significant differences, we separated the data points out.

Our 95 employer responses came from the below sectors

Legend:
- Legal
- Engineering
- Retail
- Technology and IT
- Public Sector and Charities
- Other
- Professional Services and Finance
- Telecommunications/Media

Chart values: 15%, 15%, 6%, 24%, 7%, 11%, 15%, 6%

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Section 1: Impact of the Pandemic

Due to the impact of the Global Pandemic over the past two recruitment seasons, we were keen to understand how this would shape Future Talent recruitment practices moving forward.
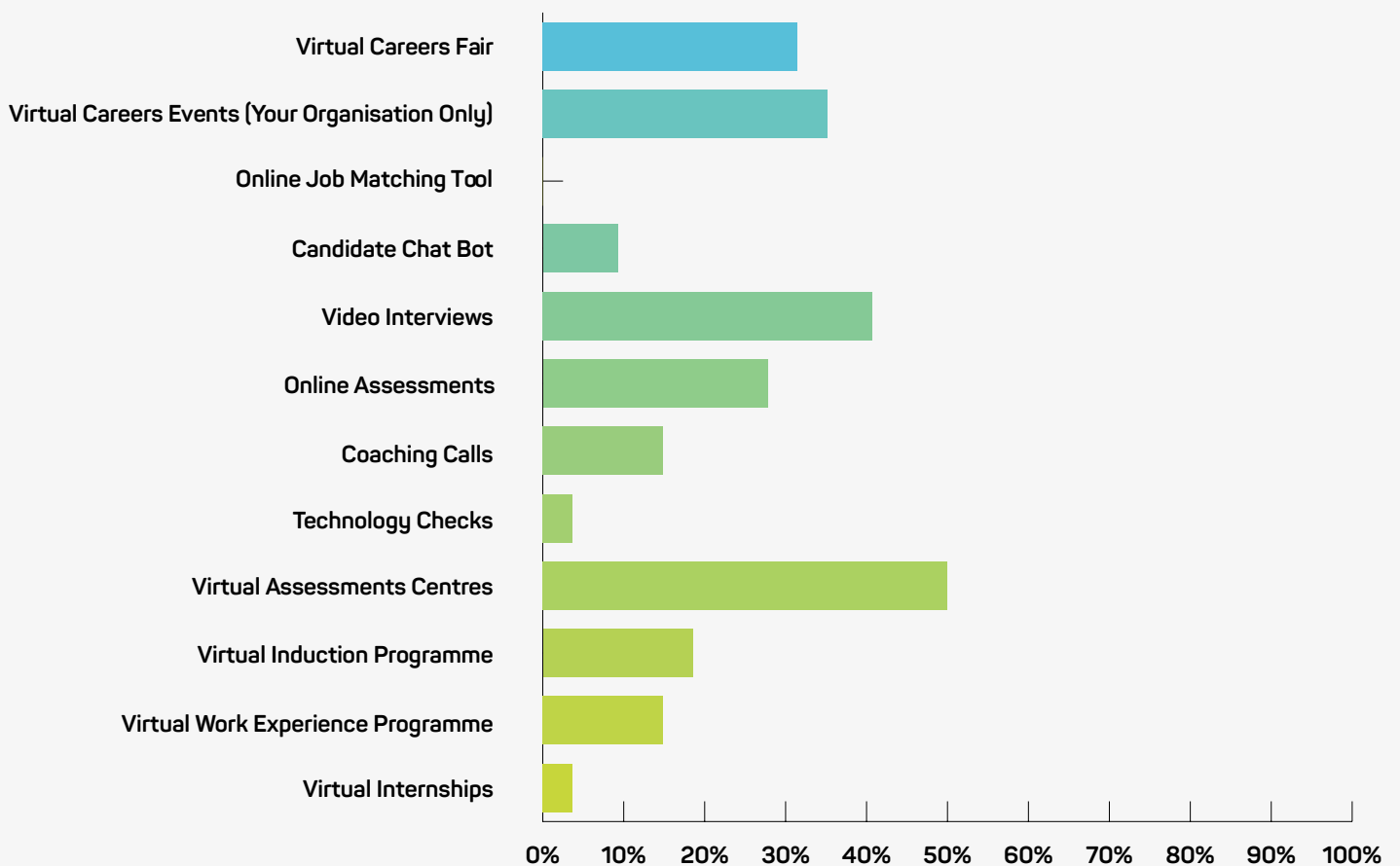
Question: What practices and processes were implemented through the pandemic?
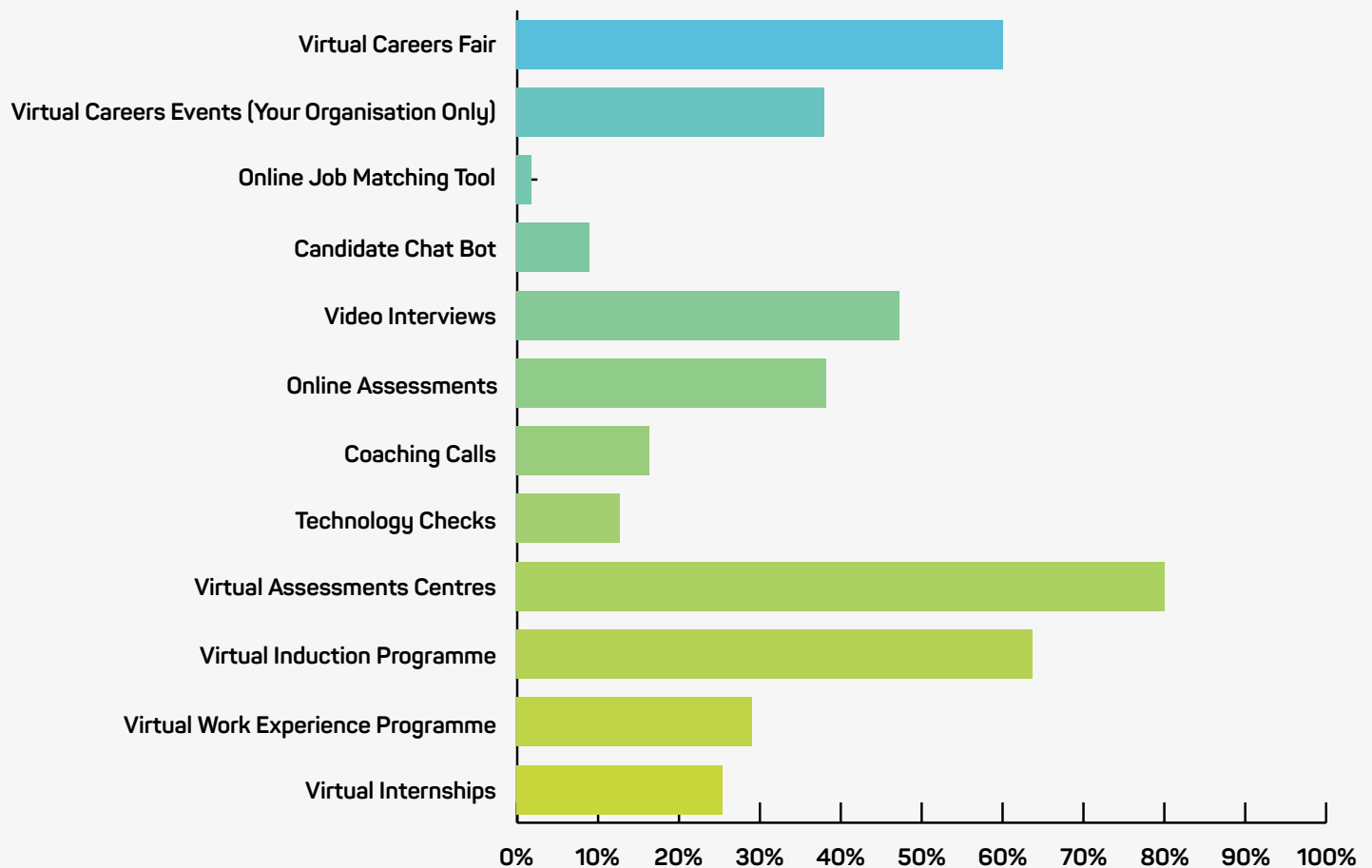
We asked employers, what practices and processes they implemented throughout the pandemic. It was no surprise that virtual careers fairs and events, video interviews and virtual assessment centres were the top answers.

Question: As restrictions have been lifted which remained?

We then went on to ask; 'as restrictions have lifted, which of these have remained?' Virtual careers events, virtual assessment centres and video interviews seem to be the key elements that have remained. This could be for a number of reasons including accessibility (ED&I), cost and resource efficiencies and candidate experience.

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Question: Do you intend to return to in-person recruitment activity?

66.67% - Hybrid

25.40% - Yes

7.94% - No
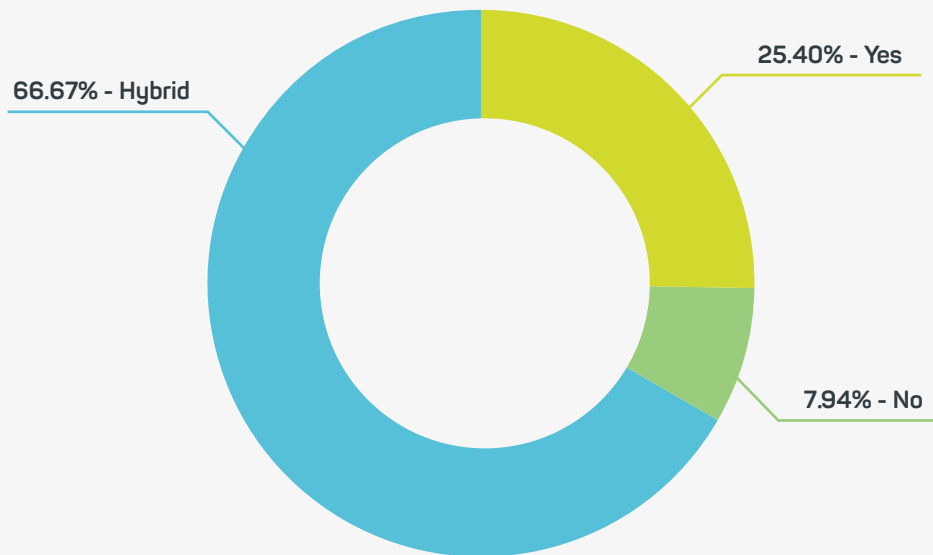
Finally, we asked employers, how they thought they would approach the new recruiting season. Nearly 70% said their hybrid approach would continue.

Considerations for Employers

- Hybrid approach is likely to continue with face-to-face activity increasing for this new season. Employers will need to carefully consider the balance and implications for brand awareness and reach.

- Continuation of digital and virtual assessment centres has led to increased candidate expectations. Employers need to keep investing in technology to provide the best possible experience.

- In a candidate led market, initiatives such as coaching calls and tech checks can help to elevate your experience and stand out from competitors. As we move back to more F2F activity these can be a great differentiator.

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Section 2: Recruitment Challenges

Each year we look at key recruitment challenges to help us understand the market but also to support organisations to find solutions.

Question: What are your key recruitment challenges?
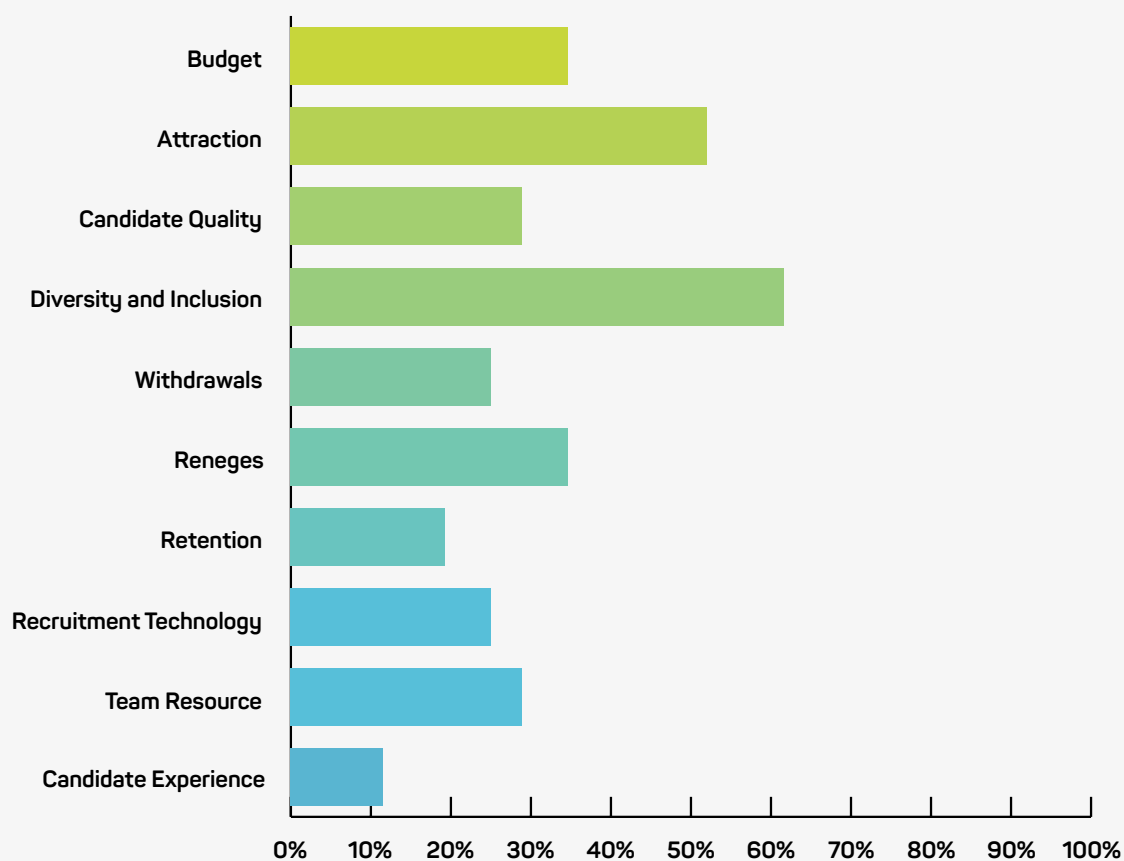
2020/21 Rank Ordered Challenges	**2021/22 Rank Ordered Challenges**
1. Recruitment Technology	1. Diversity & Inclusion
2. Budget	2. Attraction
3. Team Resource	3. Reneges
4. Candidate Experience	4. Budget
5. Candidate Quality	5. Candidate Quality

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This year, there has been a big shift in terms of perceived challenges. Last year we saw Recruitment Technology at the top. This is no surprise since, virtually overnight, all organisations had to switch their entire processes online. Budget came next. Due to the continued economic uncertainty, budgets were either reduced or hiring paused and there was certainly a nervousness around changing too much in a time that was already very unsettled.

Moving to this year, Diversity and Inclusion is cited as the number one challenge and as we move back into a candidate led market, attraction has come to the forefront again. As the market has bounced back, we've also seen an increased number of reneges, and this is a challenge that has been reported in our survey as well.

Candidate quality is consistent across both years and speaks to the challenge that all Future Talent employers face when recruiting in such a fiercely competitive market.

Section 3: Candidate Experience and Assessment

The first point we wanted to explore, is where exactly in the recruitment process candidates are dropping out.

An important point to note here is that just 2.3% of applicants get hired.

There is a very high proportion of people who won't be getting to the more resource intensive, often more personalised stages, like the interview and Assessment Centre. Therefore, there are hundreds of thousands of candidates who either drop out of the process at the application or online assessment stage.

Graduate Applications

Stage	Rejection	Withdrawal	Combined
Application	13.44%	6.05%	19.49%
Online assessment	27.46%	12.79%	40.25%
Interview	0.99%	1.09%	2.08%
Assessment Centre	1.12%	0.94%	2.06%

Apprentice Applications

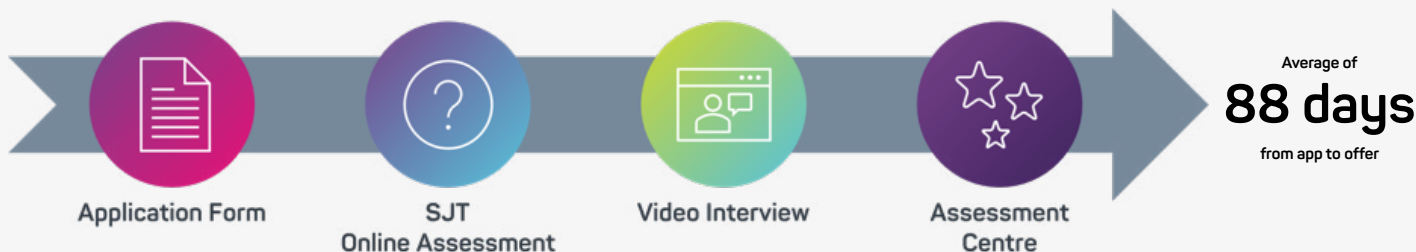| Stage	Rejection	Withdrawal	Combined
Application	19.41%	7.55%	26.96%
Online assessment	9.96%	11.03%	20.99%
Interview	1.40%	3.24%	4.64%
Assessment Centre	1.21%	1.16%	2.37%

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This is extremely important to think about, to ensure you are aware of how your brand is being perceived and the possible impact it may have if these candidates are not managed in the right way. Even at those very high volume, lighter touch stages of the process, it's possible to provide support and feedback and leave candidates with a positive impression of your organisation.

Average Number of Stages

The average Graduate Selection Recruitment Process 2021/22

Application Form   SJT Online Assessment   Video Interview   Assessment Centre

Average of
67 days
from app to offer

The average Graduate Selection Recruitment Process 2020/21

Application Form   SJT Online Assessment   Video Interview   Assessment Centre
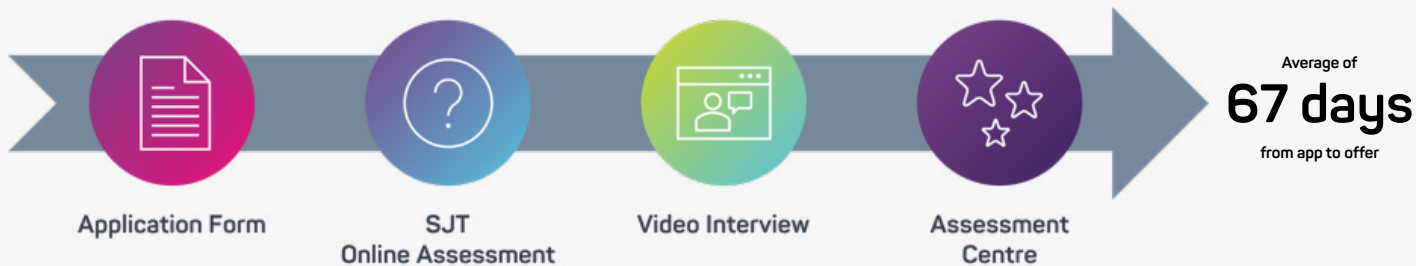
Average of
88 days
from app to offer

In terms of the typical time from application to offer, this has reduced from 88 days to 67 days. There could be a number of reasons for this, including continued use of technology, and the competitive market. What employers need to be mindful of, is how they keep these candidates engaged and keep reneges as low as possible.

The typical number of stages in a process remains static this year. The key stages tend to be:

1. **Application form**
2. **Online testing**
3. **Telephone or video Interview**
4. **Assessment centre**

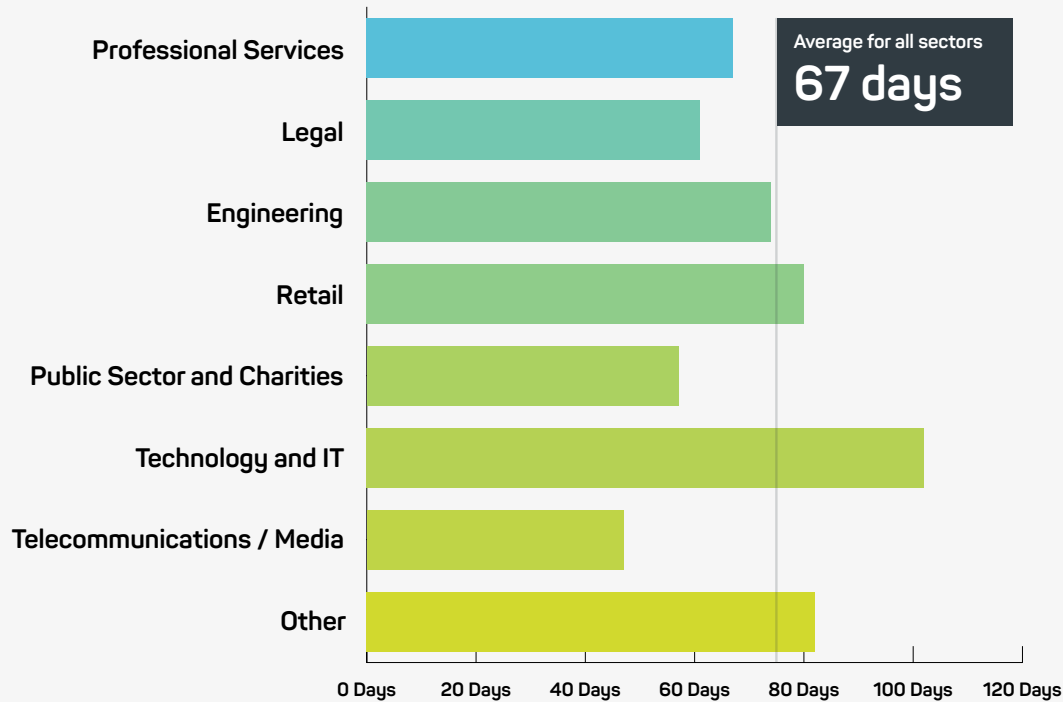**Question: Do you measure Candidate Experience?**

63.04% - Yes

36.96% - No

Given the huge volume of candidates that are dropping out of the process early on, it's quite surprising to see the number of organisations that say they're not measuring candidate experience.
Of the 95 employers that participated, nearly 40% said they do not currently measure this. This is a missed opportunity. Having such high volumes of candidates in a process can provide you critical insight into how your process is perceived and allows you to make changes in real time.

Question: Do you measure NPS?

40.91% - Yes

59.09% - No
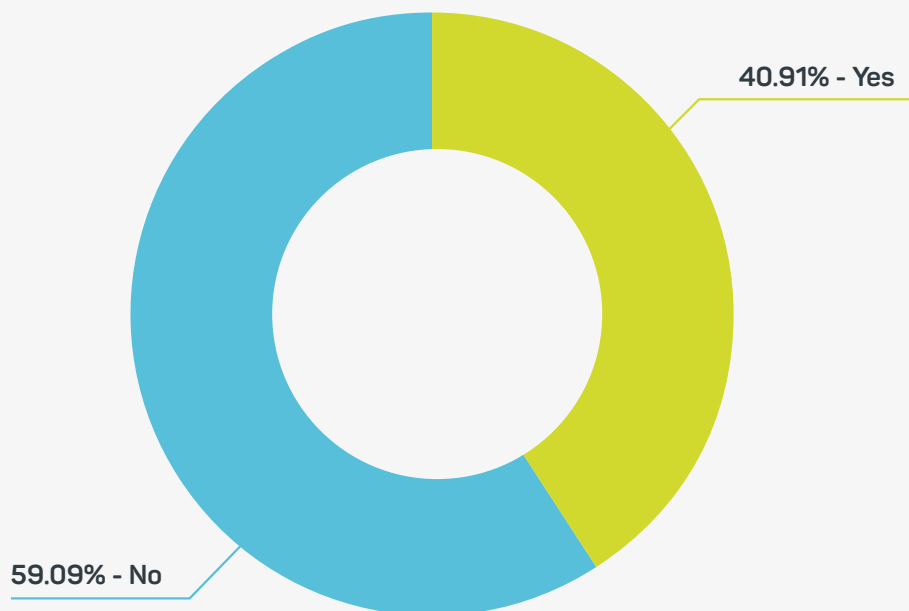
One of the most effective ways of measuring candidate experience is through Net Promoter Scores. The Net Promoter Score is a standardised question for candidates, which means you can easily benchmark across your process. Throughout your recruitment campaign, you can see which stages are performing well and more importantly, not so well, and issues can be addressed and fixed before there is a significant impact. For example, there may be particular questions or exercises that need tweaking or changing to ensure the best possible experience for candidates.

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Time to Hire

Sector	Days
Professional Services	
Legal	
Engineering	
Retail	
Public Sector and Charities	
Technology and IT	
Telecommunications / Media	
Other	

Average for all sectors
67 days

0 Days 20 Days 40 Days 60 Days 80 Days 100 Days 120 Days

There does not appear to be a significant difference in time-to-hire across sectors. The longest time-to-hire belongs to Technology and IT at 102 days, the fastest time-to-hire belongs to Telecommunications and Media.

Offers Accepted

Sector	
Professional Services	
Legal	N/A
Engineering	
Retail	
Public Sector and Charities	
Technology and IT	
Telecommunications / Media	
Other	

Overall for all sectors
87%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

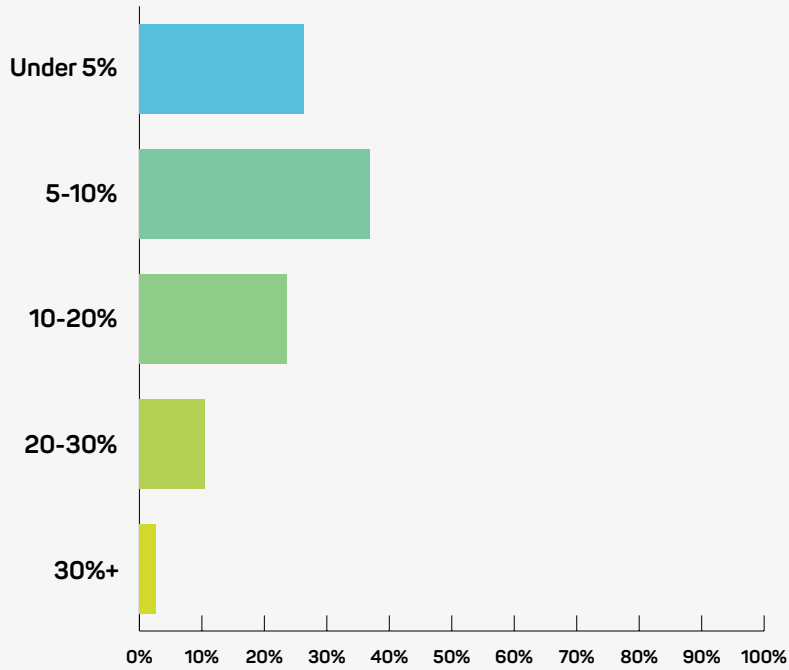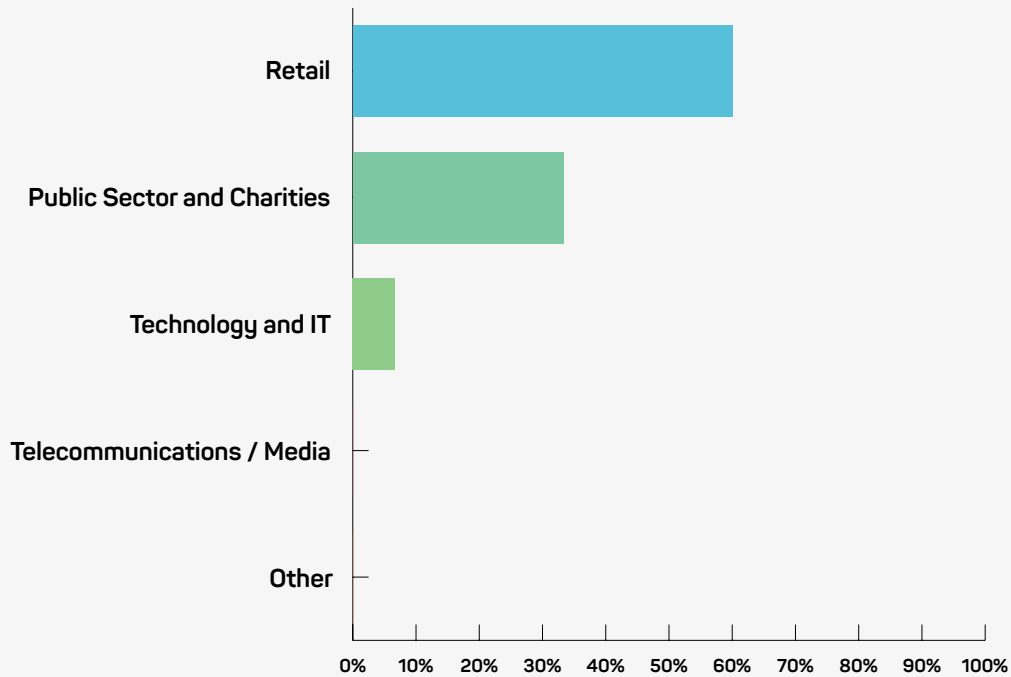amberjack
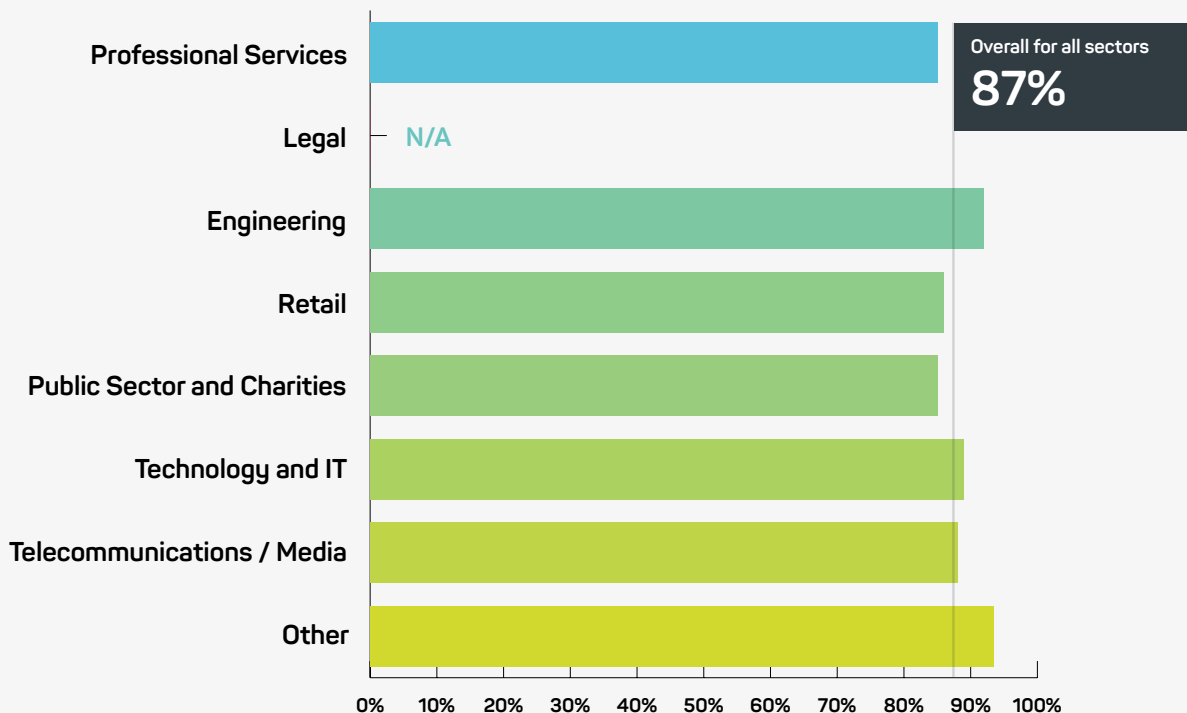
In terms of the percentage of offers accepted, this is very similar data across the different sectors with an average around 87%. For the Legal sector, we did not have enough information to report on this measurement.

Renege Rate

Graduates

Under 5%	
5-10%	
10-20%	
20-30%	
30%+	

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Apprentices

Retail	
Public Sector and Charities	
Technology and IT	
Telecommunications / Media	
Other	

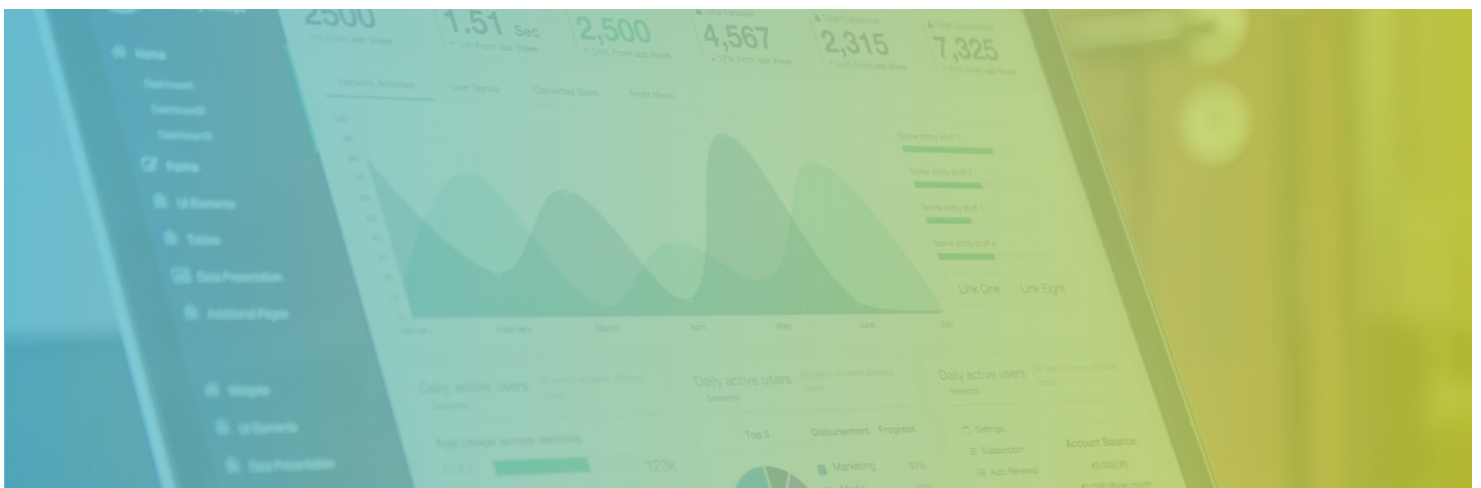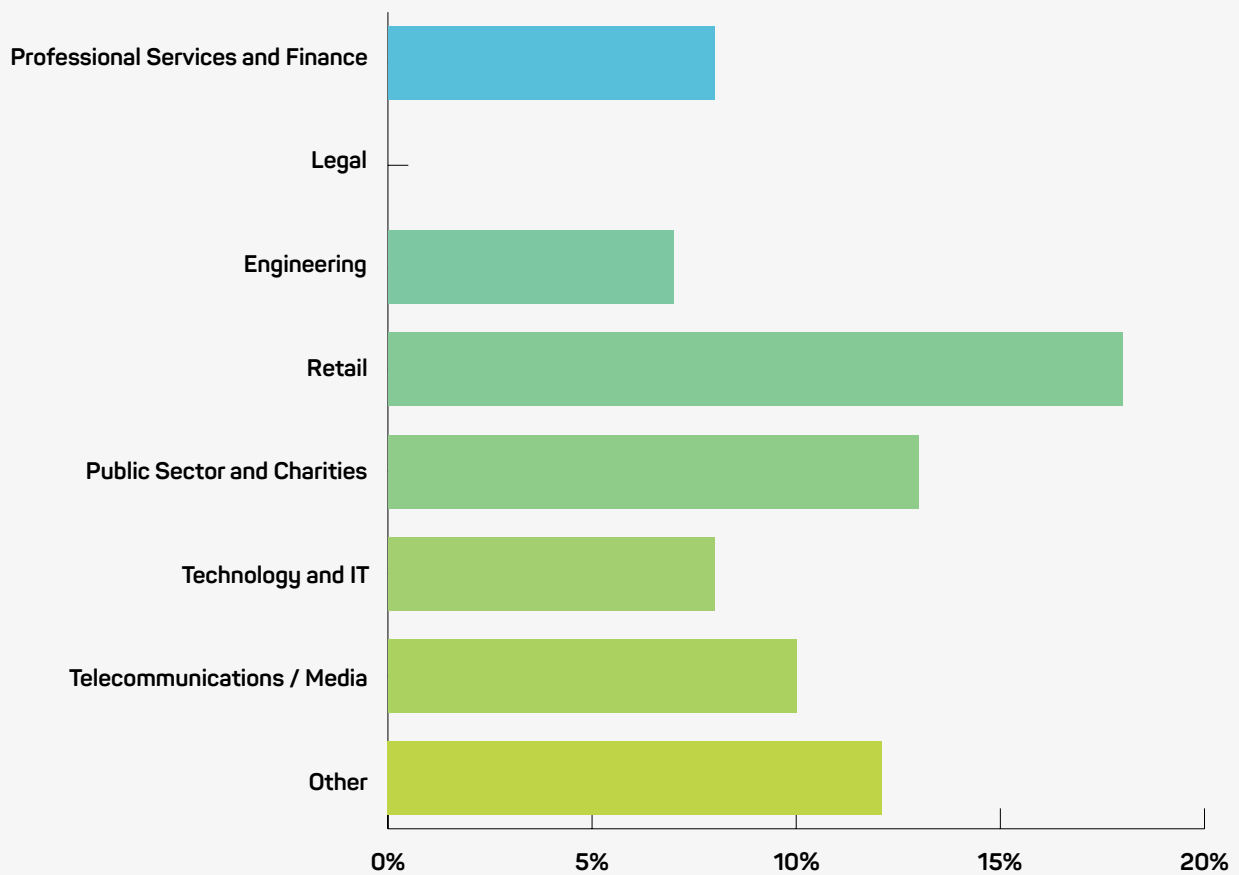0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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Renege rates have increased considerably this year. From a graduate perspective, 15% of employers are reporting a renege rate of 20-30% or 30%+ which is very high. This is probably indicative of the competitive market that employers are operating in currently.
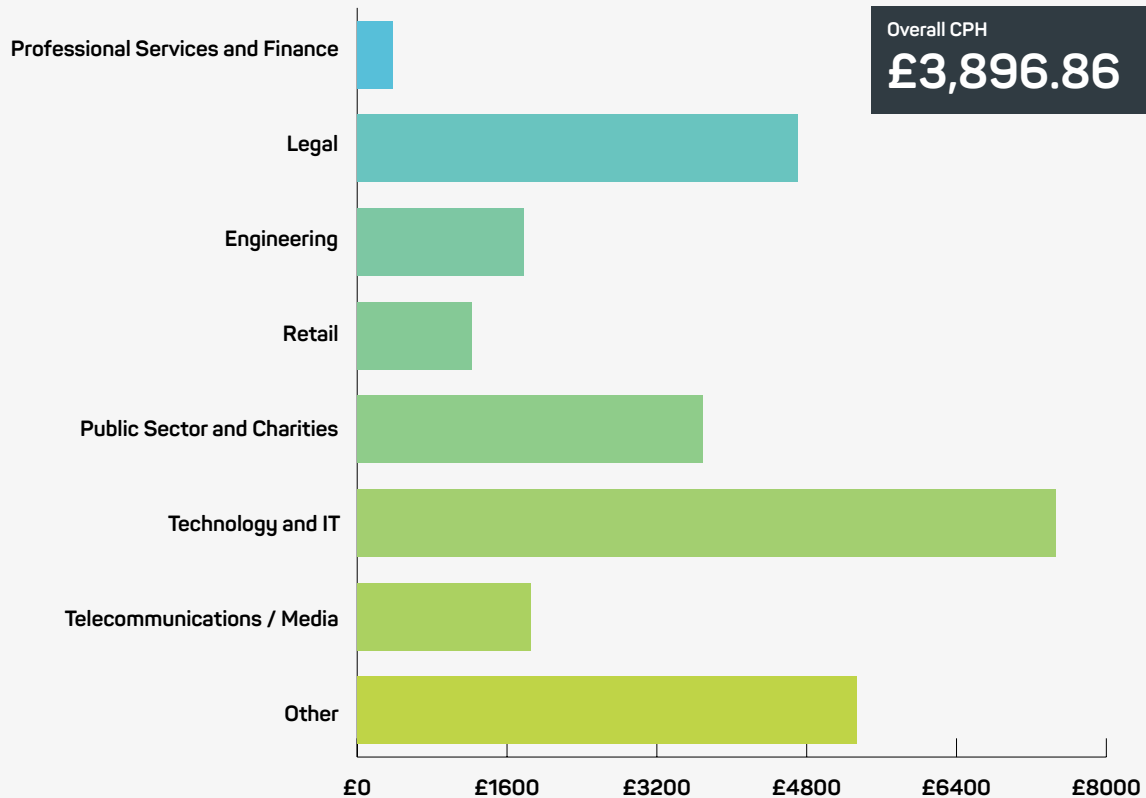
There is a more positive picture from an Apprentice perspective. Most employers have renege rates of under 5%. So, there are some real differences between the two groups.

There are several reasons as to why this might be happening. Graduates may have more offers or may be thinking 'I've got one offer in the bank, but let's see what else is available'. They may have more confidence and be more tactical in their approach. Whatever the reasons, it's important to continually track how you are managing your candidates throughout the process to ensure you have an engaging keep-warm strategy that helps you stay connected with candidates that have accepted your offer.

From a sector perspective, we're seeing particularly high reneges within Retail and the Public sector.

A horizontal bar chart showing renege rates by sector:
- Professional Services and Finance: ~8%
- Legal: ~0%
- Engineering: ~7%
- Retail: ~18%
- Public Sector and Charities: ~13%
- Technology and IT: ~8%
- Telecommunications / Media: ~10%
- Other: ~12%

Cost per Hire

Overall CPH
£3,896.86

Chart showing Cost per Hire by sector:
- Professional Services and Finance
- Legal
- Engineering
- Retail
- Public Sector and Charities
- Technology and IT
- Telecommunications / Media
- Other

X-axis: £0, £1600, £3200, £4800, £6400, £8000

Cost per hire is a notoriously tricky statistic to report on due to the differing nature of how organisations calculate it. Some employers look just at the attraction costs, others take a more holistic view, taking in recruitment and on-boarding costs. However, we ask the question as it is still useful to get an indication and benchmark. Overall, the cost per hire this year is just under £4,000, across all the different sectors.

There is, however, quite a bit of variation across the areas with the highest cost-per-hire in Technology and IT. Given this mirrors the average time-to-hire, perhaps that's indicative of a slightly more robust process in terms of the assessment stages that people go through.

Another observation on cost-per-hire, is that typically organisations put the vast majority of their budget from an assessment perspective into those high touch face-to-face elements, particularly the assessment centre. This is where a large chunk of that cost-per-hire comes from, but also where you are impacting the smallest number of candidates. Something to consider!

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Candidate Quality

83% were already recruiting for potential

47% being confident they knew how to measure potential in candidates and 19% being very confident they knew how to measure potential

93% that were not currently recruiting for potential were considering doing it, highlighting how important organisations think potential is

52% assessed potential through behavioural assessments

This data was collected via a poll that we hosted in partnership with the ISE. Due to the increased interest from employers around recruiting for Potential we were interested in finding out some of their current practices and knowledge. There were over 150 responses and we found that:

- 83% of responding organisations are already recruiting for potential.
- Of the 17% that aren't, 93% said that they were considering doing it.

So, lots of organisations are either assessing for potential or going in that direction.

However, even more interesting was that a 1/3 of these respondents said that they were not confident in terms of measuring potential; there is clearly more to be done in terms of educating employers on this topic.

Here at Amberjack, we have developed our own unique model for Identifying and Assessing Potential. You can find out more by visiting our website or requesting our insight paper.

We translate our model of Potential across our assessment solutions, our recommended approach to the majority of our clients is to create a blended assessment. A blended assessment is a combination of applied intellect items, and behavioral assessment items (with situational judgement), in one combined assessment, which creates an overall score mapped to our Model for Identifying Potential.

Applied Intellect items

Behavioural assessment (with SJT)

One overall score mapped to our model of potential

Video Interview Items

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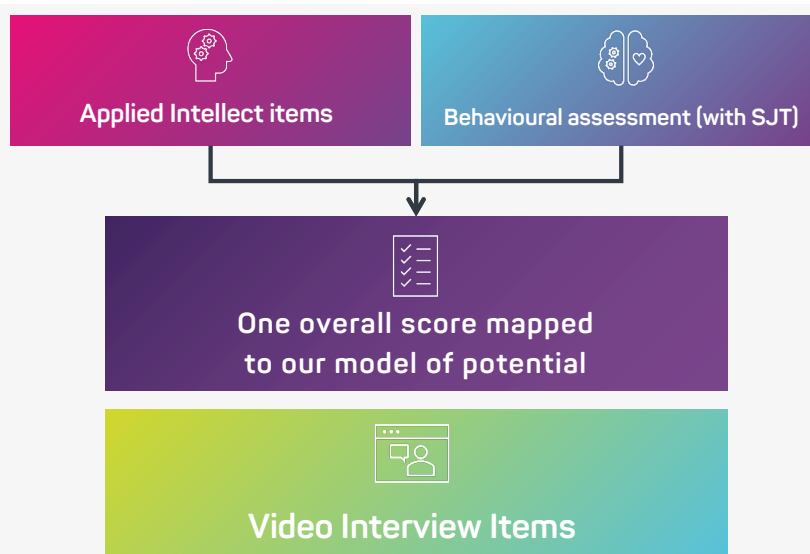
Considerations for Employers

Whilst we have provided some fantastic benchmarking data, it's important to understand that the majority of candidate data has come from our own clients. Therefore, many of them will be using our Model for Identifying Potential and our blended assessments. Because of this focus on potential (rather than experience or privilege), this could be why we are seeing such positive trends in terms of time to hire, D&I etc.

Below is a quick summary of WHY our recommended approach can introduce significant benefits:

Candidate Quality

In a blended assessment we're using a combination of different assessment types, situational judgment, behavioral and applied intellect. This provides a well-rounded picture of an individual and gains what we call the 'incremental validity' of the different types of assessment as opposed to over-reliance on one criterion.

In terms of the higher ratios, what you would typically expect to see, and we've certainly found out from our clients, is they've had to run less assessment centres because they're getting stronger candidates through the pipeline, which means there's less need to do 'top up' campaigns.

Candidate Experience

The blended approach has a very positive impact on candidate engagement because the candidates are completing all their assessment data in in one stage. Most of the assessment is video based and gives a real feel for life in role at the organisation they are applying to. The assessment typically takes around 35 to 45 minutes to complete and gives employers all the data they need to make the decisions. Rather than a more staged process, where individuals would have to jump in and out of an experience.

This, in turn, results in huge efficiencies in terms of both candidate and recruiter time, which has a big impact on cost per hire. Significant cost savings can be made from running fewer assessment centres which are typically very expensive, and it ensures a healthy pipeline of diverse candidates is retained throughout.

Candidate Pipeline

If you have a multi-stage approach to assessment, for example cognitive ability tests, this can lead to unnecessary rejection of candidates. For example, if you're managing candidates by setting a particularly high cut score based on a cognitive ability test this can have a strong impact in terms of your diversity through the process. So, by using the blended assessment and having more data to call on, you negate that potential risk, you can drive better diversity through your pipeline.

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A good candidate experience and engaging assessment experience are key to obtaining the best talent.

You can discover more on Amberjack's products and services, including information on how we can help you reach candidates, or request a chat with a member of our team, by getting in contact, today.

You can also visit our Resource Hub to explore industry insights and news.