

starcircle



# THE SHAPE OF HIRING

Trends, predictions and insights into  
the talent acquisition landscape

**2025**

# A NOTE ON THIS REPORT



starcircle

One thing has become certain over the past few years - change is constant.

Yes, change can be exhausting (and this report acknowledges that), but it also presents new opportunities, innovations, and transformative ideas that push us to rethink how we approach hiring.

And if you ask me, that's exciting. When faced with constant change, the organizations that will succeed are the ones that can adapt and grow, and hire those with the 'skill to reskill'.

And remember - you're not alone.

We surveyed our Inner Circle community members (made up of a global set of TA and HR professionals across a range of industries) to find out what their key concerns, challenges and predictions were heading into 2025.

The findings from those survey results will unfold over the following pages, but crucially we also went beyond the data and spoke to a select group of senior individuals in TA and HR to hear their first-hand perspectives on what the shape of hiring will be in 2025.

A huge thank you from all of us at Starcircle for your time and contributions to this, and we hope the insights and opinions within are useful for you as you enter the new year.

As always, we'd love to hear your personal perspectives, and if there's anything we can do to help, let's chat.

- James Galvin  
CEO  
*Starcircle*



# Being competitive in the marketplace is the number one challenge for 2025

When asked what they anticipated their biggest challenges in 2025 to be, a majority of those surveyed indicated that remaining competitive was an ongoing concern, which ties in with the second biggest challenge - improving employer brand.

77%

Being **competitive** in the marketplace

55%

Improving our **Employer Brand**

44%

Inundated with **inbound applications**

23%

Having a bad **Candidate Experience**

22%

The **quality** of our hires **is low**

“**Employer branding** is at the forefront of our minds. **Personalisation**, the human touch is so important at the moment. **Putting people first** strikes a chord, with newer generations in particular.”

**Deirdre Clarke**

Group Head of HR  
Portwest



## CHANGE MANAGEMENT & WORKFORCE PLANNING

---

After several consecutive years of major disruption, talent teams are now facing...

**‘PERMA-CRISIS’ FATIGUE**

“A lot of the talent leaders I’m speaking to are either going through or have gone through a **process of transformation.**”

I think the biggest challenge we’re facing at the moment is **‘change fatigue’** and **how to lead through change.**”

- **Amy Ho**  
Senior Director of TA Global Strategy & Operations  
*Applied Materials*



“Keeping a team **motivated** through **times of uncertainty** is difficult.

**Lots of institutions** are dealing with that at the moment.”

- **Finbarr O’Connell**  
Director of TA (EMEA)  
*OpenText*



# Workforce planning remains difficult through ongoing change and 'perma-crisis'

One phrase that came up several times in our discussions for this report was **'constant change'**, with one Recruiting Ops leader describing it as **'perma-crisis'**. Several interviewees described talent acquisition and the nature of work as **'evolving.'**

There were several areas of evolution called out in our discussions, including **employee needs and expectations**; the **tools and processes** being deployed by HR, TA and indeed the candidates themselves; and the **evolving skillsets** that organizations are trying to predict and adapt to.

How do you plan your workforce through times of enormous macro disruption and organizational change? **With difficulty**, it would seem.

The survey results revealed that **68% of respondents do not have a clear view** of their hiring needs for 2025.

Only  
**32%**  
said they have a  
**clear view** of  
their  
**organization's  
hiring needs** for  
2025

“We’re in a very **uncertain macro environment**, which makes **workforce planning** much more **complex**.”

One of the biggest challenges is - how do you build a strategy that looks at what the **current demands** are, but also anticipates **shifts in the labour market**.”


**David Burke**

Senior Director; Global TA & Employer Brand  
*Workhuman*



## AI & TECHNOLOGY

---

A solid red square is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the text area.

AI in the hiring process has become standard,  
but it's vital to maintain...

# THE HUMAN TOUCH



# AI is par-for-the-course now, but the 'human touch' is more important than ever

Could 2025 be the year we accept that AI is just a part of life now and **becomes routine**?

Many of the TA and HR leaders we spoke to thought so, with **more than half of survey respondents** saying they were currently deploying AI in their hiring process, and **another 22%** stating they were **intending to introduce it** in 2025.

But a common refrain in our conversations was that as the use of AI increases, **the human-touch in hiring** would become **even more valuable** as a competitive differentiator.



"We're looking to implement **more AI and automation efficiencies** in our hiring process. However, we also maintain a **high-quality, high-touch** interview process.

Our goal is to find ways to **optimize costs** while preserving the competitive advantages of our **personalized candidate experience.**"

**Rachel Maher**  
Director of Talent Acquisition  
NetApp



# 77%

said they are **currently using AI** in their hiring processes **or intend to** start using it in 2025

“To really **enable AI and tech integration**, we need to help our people know... ***‘What does it mean to be the human-in-the-loop?’***”

How do you make **ethical decisions?**  
How do you **verify the screening** in our recruitment and talent processes **aren't biased?** We need to ensure we are teaching the **effective, safe use of AI**, and **ethical AI in practice.”**



**Stephanie Prenderville**  
Founder - SP Consulting

## SKILLS-BASED HIRING

---

There is a massive shift towards a skills-based hiring approach, but to succeed in 2025, you must anticipate...

# SHIFTING SKILL SETS

# In 2025, everyone will get their 'License to Skill'

89%

of respondents have **already adopted** or **intend to adopt** skills-based hiring practices in 2025

56%

have **already adopted** skills-based hiring practices in parts of their business

33%

have not adopted them yet, but **intend to**

“**Skills-based hiring** will really take off in 2025, pushing traditional degree requirements to the backseat. Employers are increasingly focused on **what candidates can actually do**, rather than where they went to school - especially for non-technical or high-volume roles.”

**Shane Barnfield**

Global Head of Talent Acquisition  
*Keywords Studios*



“Some talent is **so scarce** in certain locations, GTA/HR are collaborating with the business to promote **skills-based “grow-your-own”** programmes for continually challenging roles.

Hiring people with the **right passions, behaviours and mindsets**, who don't have the proven work experience, but who want to **learn on the job**, while completing a particular educational requirement.”

**Maria Cullen**  
Talent Attraction Leader  
*Organon*



# How do you build a 'future-ready' workforce as skill sets shift drastically?

The survey revealed **'being competitive'** as the primary concern for hiring leaders in 2025, with **'skill scarcity'** and **shrinking talent pools** being called out in our conversations as an ongoing issue.

"It's clear that organizations are **scrambling to adapt** to these new skillsets," a global TA leader commented. "The talent market is modelled on **scarcity and transformation** and if these skills don't exist in the marketplace, then upskilling and reskilling might be the only way to adapt."

One HR leader told us that the organizations that will lead in 2025 will be the ones that are **"skills-mapping"** as they plan their workforce, and segmenting which skills can be performed by **automation or AI** and which skills they need **humans** to focus on.

Several people we spoke to advocated for businesses to **shift their competency models** to the new AI environment, and as Amy Ho indicates here, the **"skill to reskill"** will become a valuable skill in itself. HR leader Vijay Pendakur reinforced this when he spoke of **"the capacity to learn new things"** as being a desirable trait for 2025.

"IBM did a study that said the **half-life of skills** has dramatically decreased with the advent of AI. If the half-life of skills are shortening, then the next wave of workers we need are **the ones that can push the frontiers** and have **the skill to reskill** and apply that new skill very quickly."

## Amy Ho

Senior Director of TA Global  
Strategy & Operations  
*Applied Materials*

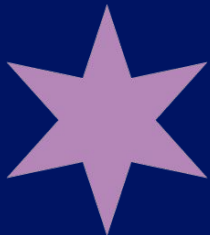


“Businesses are going to have to **think about talent differently in 2025**, shifting from, ‘**What can you do now?**’ to ‘**What can you learn?**’

The rate of **skill-extinction is accelerating** and building a **future-ready workforce** requires hiring people who have the **drive and capacity to learn new things** in the face of constant disruptive change.”

- **Vijay Pendakur**  
Team Culture Coach and  
Fractional HR Leader





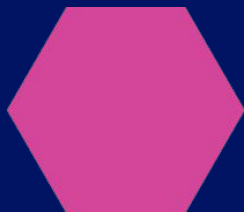
## **'PERMA-CRISIS' FATIGUE IS REAL**

The majority of hiring leaders feel they do not have a clear view of their hiring needs for 2025. Macro environmental issues and constant disruptions are now a fact of life, but keeping your team motivated and monitoring trends as the labor market shifts is critical to success.



## **THE HUMAN TOUCH IS CRUCIAL**

The deployment of AI as part of hiring is becoming routine, with 77% of hiring teams already using it or intending to use it in 2025. But it is crucial to deploy AI ethically and use it sensibly, where it can remove burdensome tasks and make space for the most valuable part of the hiring process - the human touch. Personalisation and human interaction will become an increasingly important part of the candidate experience in 2025, and help businesses to remain competitive.



## **PRIORITIZE THE 'SKILL TO RESKILL'**

Deploying AI effectively will give you and your team the space and time to plan effectively, and map the skills and competencies your organization needs to succeed. As automation increases and the half-life of technical skills decreases, one human skill should be prioritized - the 'skill to reskill'. Having the capacity to adapt to change and learn new things will become increasingly desirable qualities.



# THANK YOU

starcircle

A huge thank you to everyone who completed the survey for this report.

And thank you to the individual contributors who took time out of their busy days to chat with us and share their valuable perspectives. They are:

- Deirdre Clarke - Group Head of HR, Portwest
- Amy Ho - Senior Director of TA Global Strategy & Operations, Applied Materials
- Finbarr O'Connell - Director of TA (EMEA), OpenText
- David Burke - Senior Director; Global TA & Employer Brand, Workhuman
- Stephanie Prenderville - Founder, SP Consulting
- Shane Barnfield - Global Head of Talent Acquisition, Keywords Studios
- Maria Cullen - Talent Attraction Leader, Organon
- Vijay Pendakur - Team Culture Coach and Fractional HR Leader

## The Path to Better Hiring Starts Here...

If you share any of the concerns or challenges outlined in this report, then we'd love to chat.

Starcircle has helped some of the world's biggest companies overcome their unique hiring challenges. Give us a call and found out how our talent acquisition platform can set you up for success in 2025.

Let us help



starcircle 

# THE SHAPE OF HIRING

Thank you for reading, and Happy New Year!

**2025**