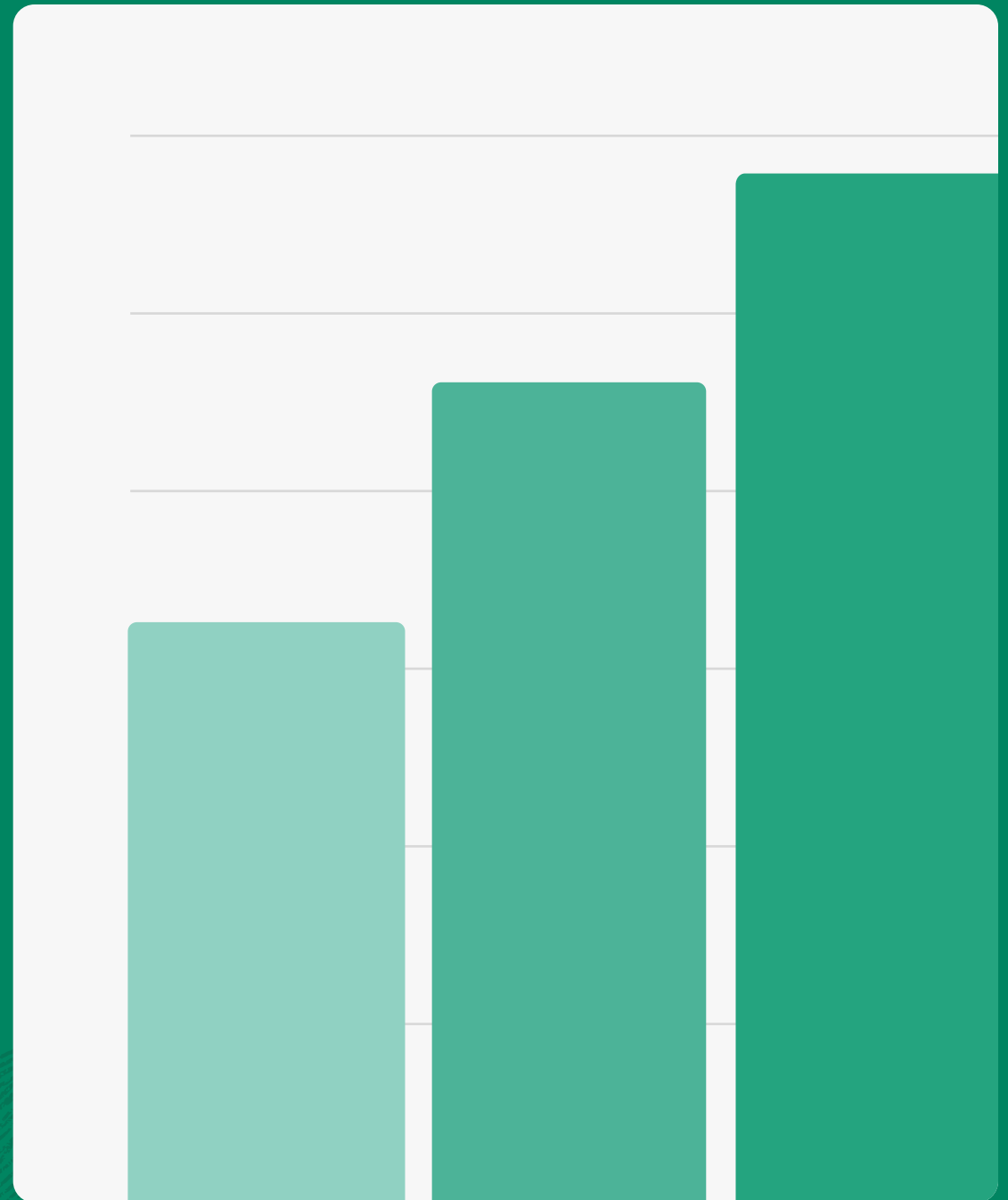


The Hire Standard

Benchmark report, March 2026

Learn how recruiters are adapting to a new hiring environment and how they can improve in 2026 and beyond.

Europe



2022
– 2025

How are recruiters faring in an environment defined by high application volumes and AI?

Recruiting teams faced a fundamental reset between 2022 and 2025. The tools, workflows and expectations that defined effective recruiting just a few years ago no longer match the reality of what talent acquisition teams manage today. Teams feel overwhelmed by application volumes, and AI seems to have supercharged the top-of-funnel candidate pipeline.

However, we haven't had a clear picture of how this environmental shift has truly impacted outcomes, and the effectiveness of recruiters and recruiting teams. Until today.

We analysed data from 17M+ applications and over 800 organisations in Europe across three years to understand what's changed, what's held steady and what benchmarks have changed the most in the hiring landscape:

- Is hiring significantly slowing down due to application volumes?
- Are fewer jobs closing without hires?
- Are recruiters less or more effective given the two-sided impact AI has had on the hiring process?

Our data analysis answers these questions and more. Alongside our expert commentary, this report will give you a snapshot of where recruiters stand today and how they can improve their benchmarks in this new environment.

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Why benchmarks matter differently now

Most traditional recruiting benchmarks were built for a very different hiring environment. One that was predictable in hiring volume, had a relatively strong understanding of the tools and technology accessible to recruiting teams, and didn't have to think about candidate risk or fraud.

Now that the hiring environment has changed dramatically, it offers an opportunity to think differently about benchmarks. Today, the value of benchmarking isn't comparing your metrics with industry averages. It's understanding whether your team's performance is sustainable given the volume they're managing and the resources they have to work with.

Benchmarks should answer

- ✓ “Are we performing effectively and efficiently?”
- ✓ “Can we sustain this?”
- ✓ “Where should we be improving?”

The most valuable benchmarks reveal whether your current hiring model can scale effectively, whether any recent efficiency gains are sustainable or whether your team is even able to adapt to the new hiring environment.



2025 benchmarks by the numbers

We analysed recruiting performance across thousands of organisations to understand how teams are navigating the current hiring landscape. Here's what we found.

2025

Core performance metrics

62.2

Days to fill a job

↑ 40.2% from 2022 to 2025



71.6%

Jobs closed with hire

↑ 12.9% from 2022 to 2025



Per recruiter



3.5

Monthly hires per recruiter

↑ 112.8% from 2022 to 2025



467.9

Annual interviews scheduled per recruiter

↑ 202.5% from 2022 to 2025

Per job and hire



22.2

Interviews per job

↓ 6.2% from 2022 to 2025



11.4

Average interview hours per hire

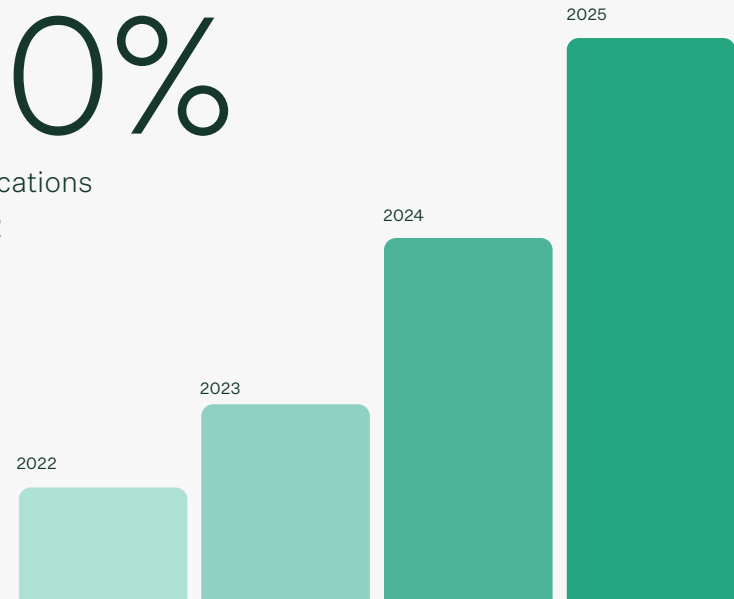
↑ 50.8% from 2022 to 2025

2022–2025

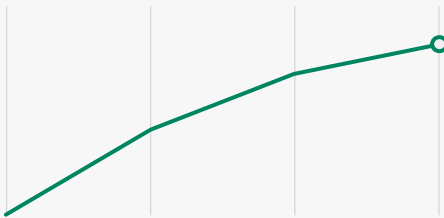
Volume and capacity metrics

385.0%

Increase in annual applications per recruiter since 2022



2025: 136 applications

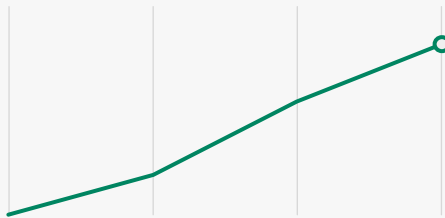


99.9%



Increase in applications per hire since 2022

2025: 34,887 applications

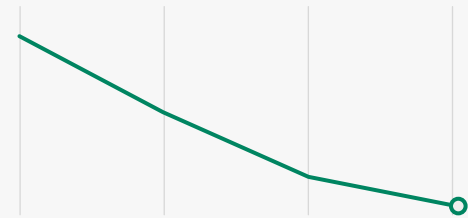


106.8%



Increase in annual applications per organisation since 2022

2025: 6 recruiters



57.4%



Decrease in recruiters per organisation since 2022

2025

Funnel efficiency metrics

8.7%

Recruiter-sourced
hires in 2025

+6.0% since 2024



Progression rates for interview stages



Stage 1 progression rate

10.0%



50% -16.6% since 2022

Stage 2 progression rate

23.2%

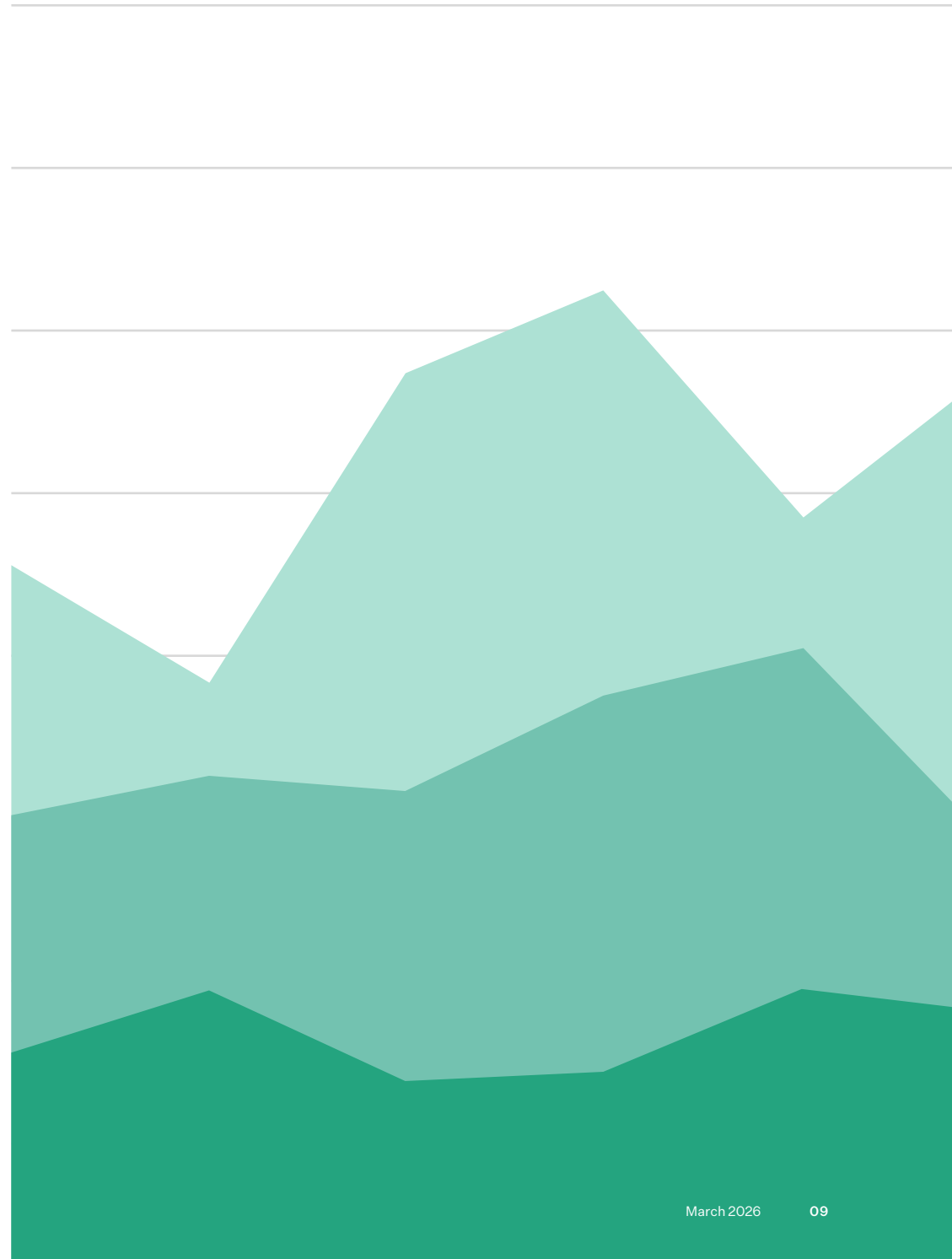


50% +7.8% since 2022

2022 2025

What the data reveals

While candidates are overwhelming recruiters at the top of the pipeline, our findings suggest that efficiencies are found throughout the process, resulting in improved recruiter performance.



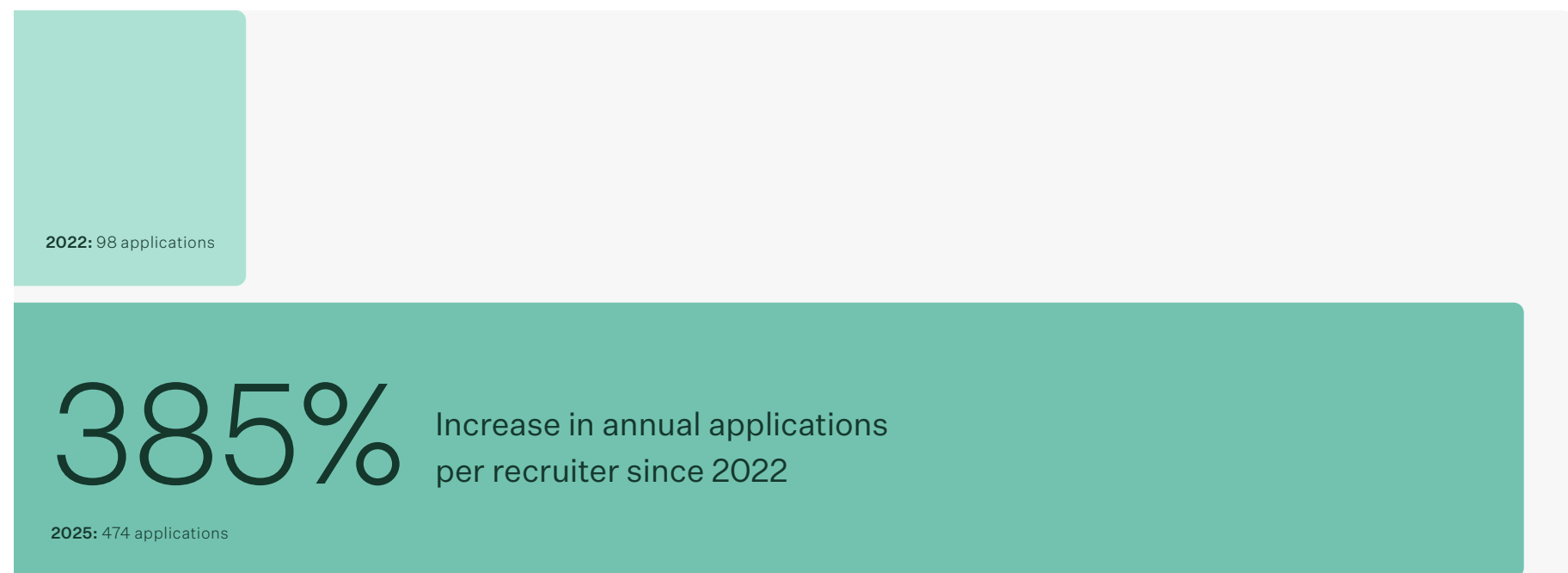
Top-of-funnel pipelines are flooded, and recruiters have fewer resources

The surge in applications is the headline, but the scale of increase is worth highlighting. Organisations are seeing more than **double the application volume** compared with three years ago. On the individual level, recruiters are managing over 385% more applications than they were in 2022. At the same time, recruiter team sizes have been cut by more than half.

Several factors have driven this shift over the last few years. AI-powered candidate tools, frictionless application processes and shifting candidate behaviour in an unpredictable economy have resulted in candidates applying to more jobs than ever before.

There are also fewer jobs available, meaning more candidates are competing for fewer roles. The ratio of applications per job **increased by 86%** – from roughly 98 applications per role in 2022 to 183 in 2025.

Overall, this is a story we've known, at the very least anecdotally. Applications are up and recruiter teams are smaller. But how is that translating to recruiter performance?



Recruiters are performing well, despite a “hostile” environment

The data above describes a rough environment for recruiting teams: more applications than ever, smaller teams, higher pressure. Yet recruiter performance hasn't collapsed. In several areas, it's actually improved.

Hiring is more productive. Over the last three years, the number of jobs closed with a hire increased by nearly 13% over three years, and monthly hires per recruiter more than doubled, jumping 113%, despite having a smaller team. Recruiters are making more placements, not getting buried under volume.

Interview metrics increased significantly. Average interviews per hire increased by over 200%, and interview hours per hire rose by 50%. This speaks to the larger point in our data: recruiters aren't blindly advancing candidates to compensate for higher volume and are more intentionally vetting candidates, resulting in higher interview hours and total interviews. This has resulted in lower first-stage progression rates, but higher second-stage progression rates, indicating that teams are triaging effectively rather than passing the burden to hiring managers.

Recruiter performance has improved in several areas

12.9% ↑

Increase in number of jobs closed with a hire since 2022

112.8% ↑

Increase in monthly hires per recruiter since 2022

202.5% ↑

Increase in interviews scheduled per recruiter since 2022

Organisations need to take more interviews to make the same number of hires, especially given all the spam and fraud out there in the market.”

Ariana Moon

VP of Talent Planning & Acquisition, Greenhouse

Ariana Moon, VP of Talent Planning & Acquisition at Greenhouse, provides a key insight here, saying that “organisations need to take more interviews to make the same number of hires, especially given all the spam and fraud out there in the market.”

A relatively small increase in time-to-fill indicates intentionality. Time-to-fill has increased by 40%, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing for all organisations. This might suggest recruiters are maintaining quality standards rather than rushing to close roles with whoever’s available.

Matt Alder, Host of the Recruiting Future podcast, says that three forces are likely the reason why recruiters have been able to perform more effectively despite such a high volume of applicants.

“While AI tools have permanently reduced the friction of applying, resulting in increased volumes, tooling has created screening capacity on the employer side that simply did not exist in 2022, and corporate restructuring has put genuinely strong active candidates into the market. Better talent supply improves closing rates independently of anything TA has done differently.” – Matt Alder

Tools and technology are improving recruiter

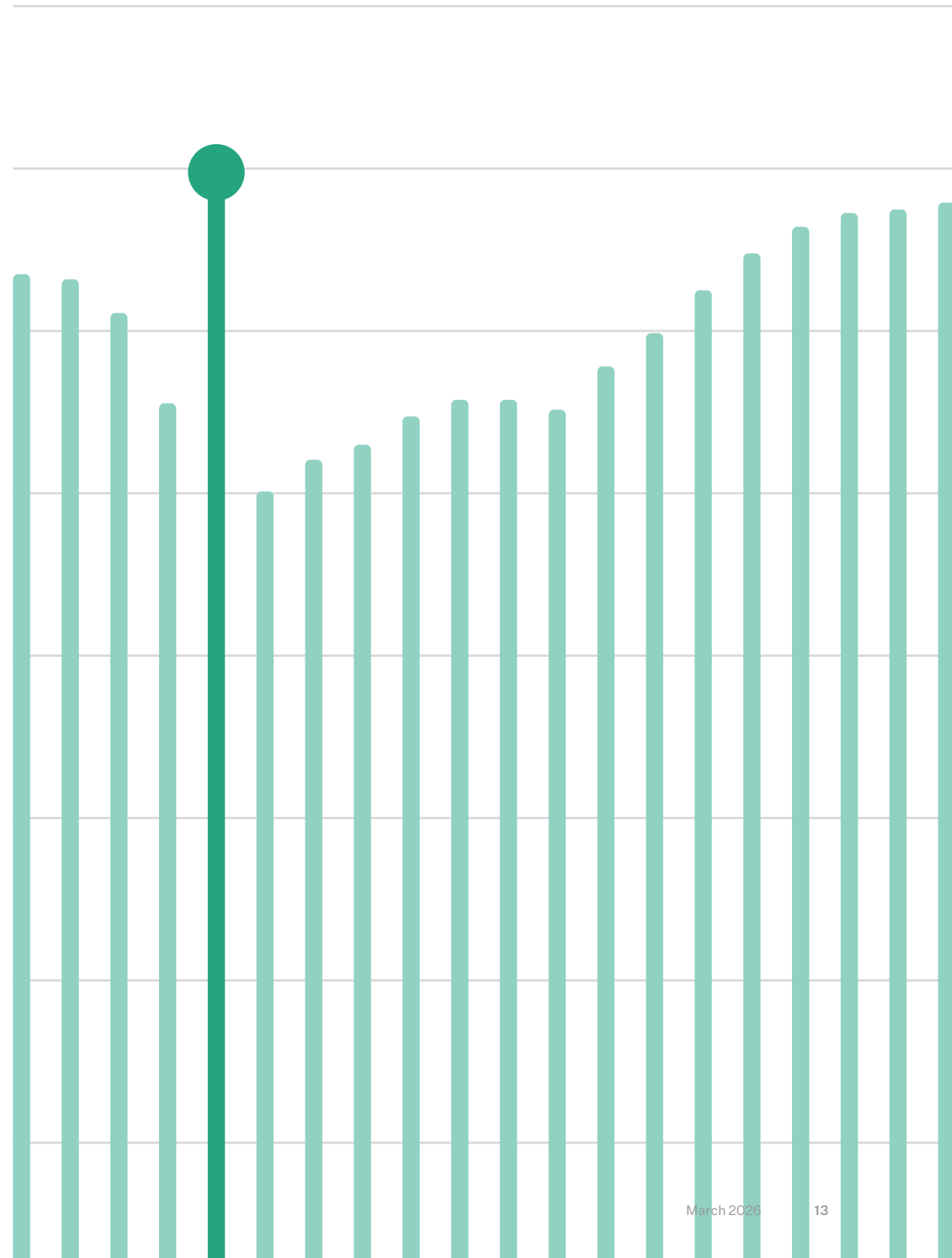
performance. It’s clear that stronger tech infrastructure is allowing recruiters to better manage their flooded pipelines. AI-powered screening, applicant tracking systems that automate scheduling and communication, and workflow improvements that reduce manual work are all ways recruiters are doing more with less.

“While volume has increased, the sophistication of the technology evolving along with this problem is what’s helped recruiters manage this volume. Tools like fraud and spam detectors knock out irrelevant applications while talent matching tools surface resumes that look best. All of these advancements make a big impact.” – Ariana Moon

Next, we dig into sourcing data to understand what application sources are leading to the most hires.

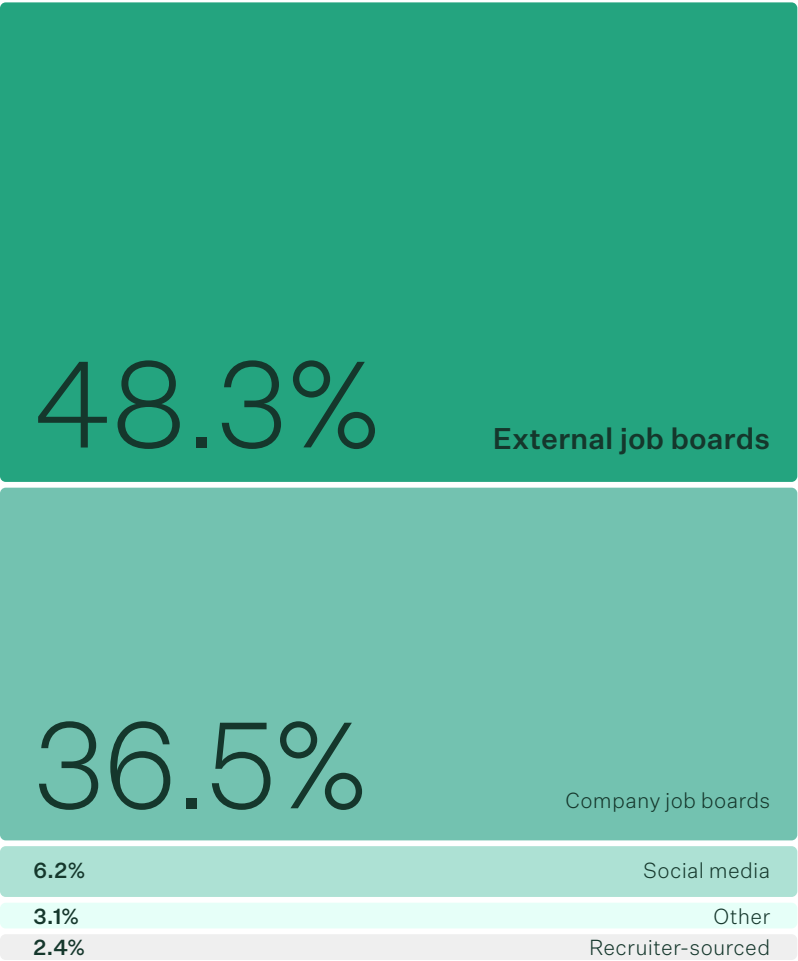
Sourcing channels that drive the most hires

We analysed recruiting performance across thousands of organisations to understand how teams are navigating the current hiring landscape. Here's what we found.

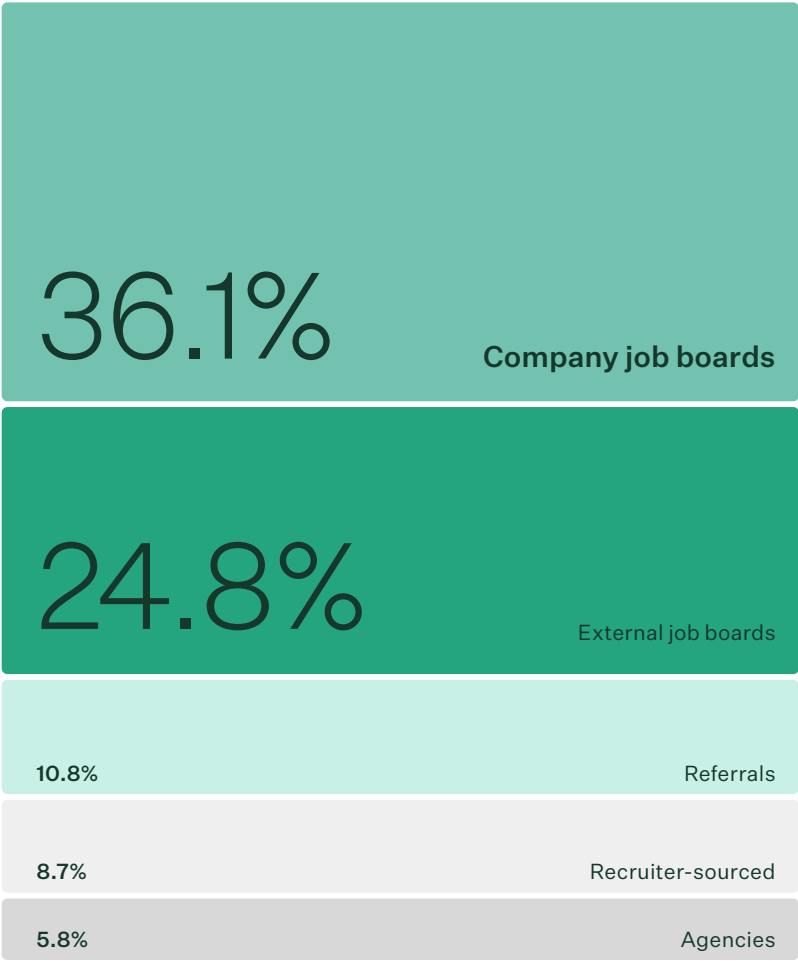


Top five sources: Applications vs hires in 2025

Application source



Hire source



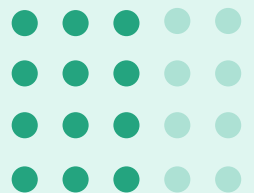
Sourcing stats: Recruiters and job boards



8.7%

Hires sourced by recruiters
in 2025

Recruiters source over 8% of hires despite contributing only 2.5% of applications. This is a significant conversion rate, but that doesn't necessarily mean you should hire more recruiters – sourcing is time-intensive and doesn't scale linearly. However, it does indicate that your recruiting team should be encouraged and empowered to proactively source candidates given its effectiveness.

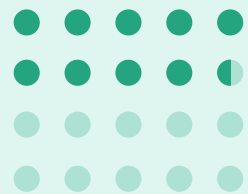


60.9%

Hires sourced by job boards
in 2025

Job boards (internal + external) source nearly 85% of all applications but make up only around 60% of hires. This isn't necessarily a problem or surprising – high-volume channels will always have lower conversion rates. However, this reinforces an important point: investing heavily on external job boards without optimising other channels means paying for volume, not quality.

How job boards source applications and hires



48.3%

Applications sourced by
external job boards in 2025

External job boards contribute less than a quarter of hires despite driving half of all applications. Despite being the second-highest source for hires, the conversion gap between applications and hires remains significant. For TA leaders, this raises a question: are you spending on external boards because that's where the budget has always gone, or are you actually assessing the value of these boards?



36.1%

Hires from company
job boards in 2025

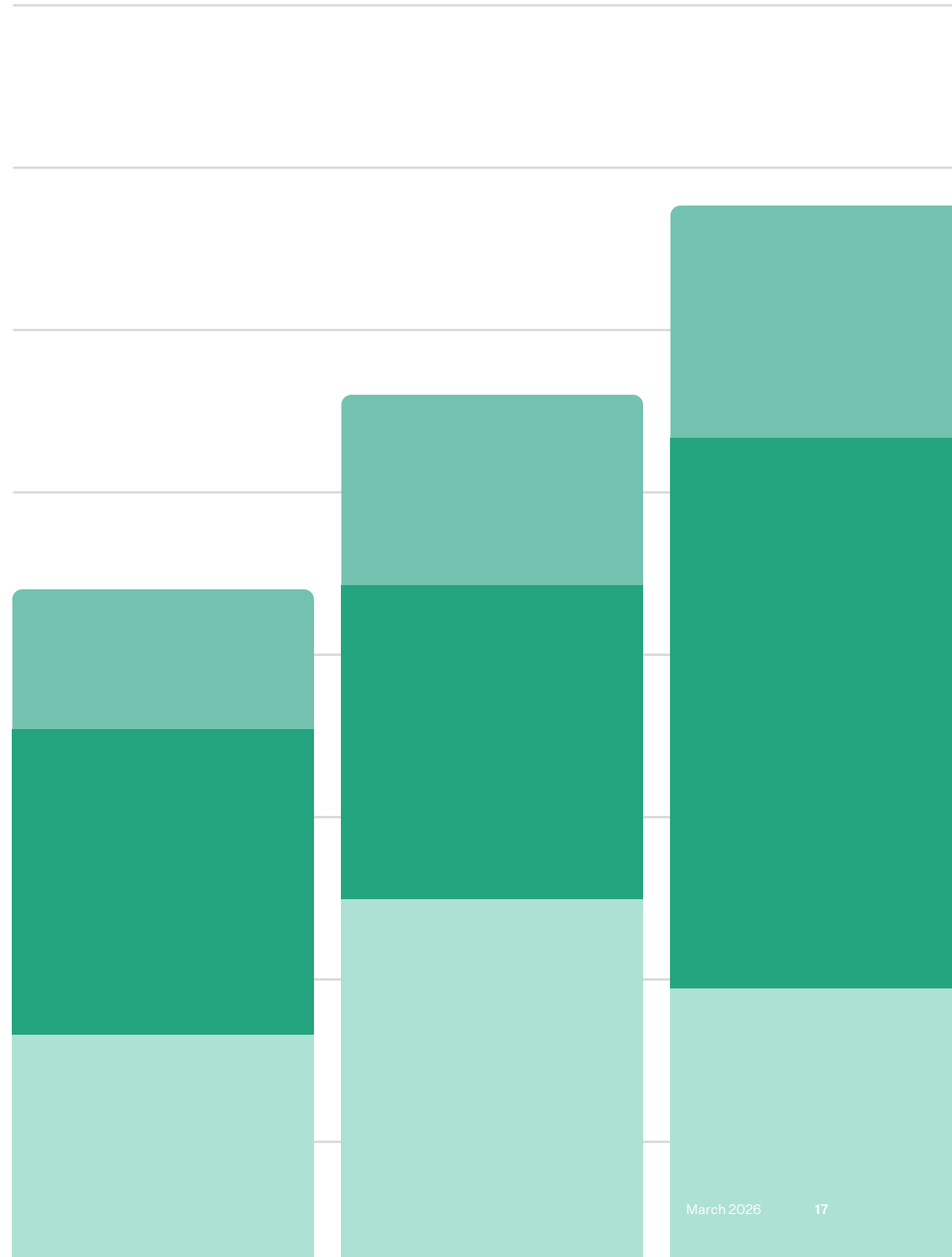
Company job boards are the top source of hires. They account for 36% of hires, making company career sites a critical asset and a clear source to optimise and invest in.

This level of sourcing data can illuminate and guide TA leaders on where to invest their time and priority. Given the data, “proactive sourcing remains one of the few genuine differentiators available to TA teams,” says Alder. “This data makes a reasonable case for treating it as a priority rather than a capacity-dependent afterthought.”

Now that we understand how the hiring environment has shifted and where performance truly matters, we can start identifying how teams can improve these benchmarks and adapt to the new reality.

Key takeaways to improve benchmarks

The data reveals what's working, but it also points to where TA teams need to evolve to sustain performance as the hiring landscape continues to evolve.



Managing high-volume pipelines is the new normal

Adapting to AI at the top of the funnel with tools and structured processes

High application volumes are the new normal and will increase as AI application tools become more sophisticated. The sustainable response is smarter filtering from the outset, not more people processing more applications.”

Matt Alder

Producer and Host, Recruiting Future Podcast

Any TA team that hasn't adapted to permanently higher top-of-funnel volume will likely see key hiring benchmarks decline. However, teams that want to sustain performance should focus on these essentials: leveraging AI, maximising the quality of your candidate pipeline and investing in your own brand as a hiring organisation.

Alder further suggests organisations develop stronger processes and structure to account for the new normal here: “Structure and defined criteria at every stage matter more under volume pressure, not less, because fast decisions under pressure default to instinct, and instinct at scale creates its own problems.”

Moon, on the other hand, advises on how organisations can defend against AI-powered candidates, especially when it comes to fraud and talent: “You need the right tools like fraud and spam detection, and talent matching, but you also need to consider your interview process to minimise the risk of a mis-hire, which can happen even under an extremely efficient process.” She recommends organisations consider improving their background screening processes and even establishing AI-resistant structured interviews that uncover “human judgement and critical thinking instead of just identifying attributes that might fit a job”.

Becoming a hiring organisation candidates will seek out

The data already suggests how important it is to invest in and optimise your own job board to ensure you're capturing high-intent and high-quality candidates. However, engaging in transparency and authenticity, especially in the face of AI, can also be a major differentiator.

“Being explicit about your company’s relationship with AI, even during the hiring process, is a way to repel the wrong person and attract the right hire,” says Moon. She further elaborates, **encouraging companies to publicise their stance on AI**, how they use it, and how they’re encouraging adoption for their employees, as that can inform the quality of your inbound applicants.

Alder agrees, highlighting the importance of the human element, especially as TA teams adopt AI tools. “The clearest recommendation for 2026 is to be deliberate about where human judgement is genuinely required and where it is not. The teams that get that division of labour right will consistently outperform those adding more technology to processes that were never properly designed.”



The final word



The human element of resourcing matters more than ever before, so any change in processes, tech infrastructure or AI use should always consider maintaining the human in hiring.

Recruiting teams have navigated a fundamental shift in how hiring works, and the data suggests they're navigating it quite well.

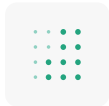
While application volumes have more than doubled and team sizes have been cut in half, recruiters are closing more roles, making more hires and maintaining quality standards.

However, for teams that feel like they're still catching up – or questioning whether this new normal is unsustainable – we can point to some key takeaways that will help preserve recruiter performance and even improve it moving forward.

Use of AI tools, especially those that address the top-of-funnel pipeline, is a must. TA leaders should also understand and invest in their company job boards but also in their reputation as a hiring organisation.

Lastly, the human element of resourcing matters more than ever before, so any change in processes, tech infrastructure or AI use should always consider maintaining the human in hiring. Only then can your team manage their pipelines more effectively, ensure a high quality of candidate and make better hires.

Methodology



Greenhouse analysed recruiting performance data in Europe from over 800 organisations and spanning more than 17M applications from 2022 to 2025. Benchmarks reflect aggregated performance metrics and sourcing data from companies using the Greenhouse platform.

Contributing experts



Ariana Moon

VP of Talent Planning & Acquisition, Greenhouse

Ariana Moon is the VP of Talent Planning & Acquisition and a member of the Senior Leadership Team at Greenhouse Software. She has led talent initiatives in multiple industries, and in her current role, has helped Greenhouse 10x in global headcount. In 2022, Ariana was named one of the top 20 Talent Leaders In Tech US, among leaders from Workday, Google and Reddit, and in 2023 and 2024, she was named one of the top global 100 Talent leaders by HIGHER. She has served as Chair of Greenhouse's ERG for Asian and Pacific Islander employees and on the customer advisory boards of leading tech companies CodeSignal and BrightHire. Outside of work, Ariana is an avid yoga practitioner, dancer and proud boy-mom, residing in Las Vegas.



Matt Alder

Producer and Host, Recruiting Future Podcast

Matt Alder is the host of Recruiting Future, one of the world's most popular talent acquisition podcasts. Over the past 25 years he has built a reputation as a global thought leader, helping employers worldwide harness innovation in HR and Talent Acquisition. A strategic consultant and futurist, he is the author of two books on talent strategy and is recognised for his forward-thinking approach. Matt has delivered keynote speeches in 18 countries, helping to shape the global conversation about the future of talent acquisition.



Greenhouse is the leading hiring platform to help companies get measurably better at hiring. Our AI-powered software supports every stage of the hiring process, from sourcing to onboarding, giving businesses everything they need to hire top talent quickly, consistently and fairly – today and as their business grows.

To learn more, visit

greenhouse.com