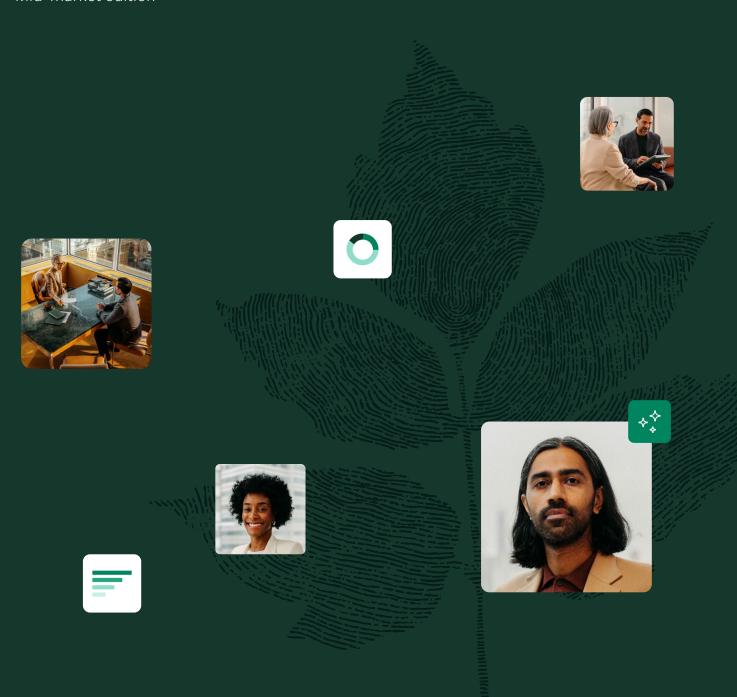
greenhouse

2025 Workforce and hiring report

Mid-market edition



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Executive summary of findings

Greenhouse, the leading hiring platform, surveyed more than 2,200 full-time workers and temporarily unemployed job seekers from the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland.



7 in 10

7 in 10 candidates across all regions say the job market is extremely or very competitive

26%

26% of US job seekers say AI has made it harder to stand out due to increased competition, but 31% say AI has provided tools that assist the job search process

1/3

Nearly one-third of job seekers from historically underrepresented groups modify their name

72%

72% of US job seekers have experienced "a bait and switch" during the hiring process 40%

Over 40% of job seekers across all regions use Al for interview prep

1/4

Over one-quarter of job seekers surveyed say they haven't seen an employer policy on Al use during a job interview

1/2

Nearly half of US candidates abandon an application because they have to re-enter resume information

50%

50% of job seekers across all regions have faced discriminatory questions during the interview process

Intoduction

The balancing act that today's mid-market TA teams need to navigate

Recruiting is always a balancing act, especially for mid-market companies. You're firmly out of the hypergrowth phase, so you can't be as scrappy as a startup, but you're also not as established or resourced as some of your enterprise competitors.

Executives are watching every hire, finance is scrutinizing headcount growth, and candidates – especially those navigating new technologies like AI – are demanding more transparency and better experiences.

It can also be hard to pin down what's going on in the market. What do today's candidates want? How can you stand out and get their attention amidst all the noise? The 2025 Greenhouse Workforce Survey Report is your guide to tapping into the job seeker's mindset.

We surveyed over 2,200 active job seekers across the US, UK and Ireland to understand how today's market pressures are shaping their expectations, decisions and deal-breakers.

Our research reveals what candidates are saying about the market, the role of Al in their job search, their top application frustrations and much more. Read on for a deeper dive into the data and what it means for today's midmarket TA teams.



The job search reality

Greenhouse surveyed 6,000 workers across the US, UK and Ireland and found 37% are job searching. In contrast, 32% are not actively job searching or are focused on their current job and casually reviewing opportunities (31%).

The report's findings focus on the 2,200+ workers who were actively job searching.



Length of job search among active job seekers Searching for less than 3 months: 34% Searching for 3-6 months: 35% Searching for 6-12 months: 18% Searching for 1-2 years: 8% Searching for more than 2 years: 6% Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

Two-thirds of active job seekers (69%) have been looking for less than 6 months.



Ireland leads: 69% are confident in the job market vs 56% in the UK and the US.

The US is most pessimistic: 44% lack confidence (highest of the three countries).

Section 1

The job market landscape

Candidates overwhelmingly think the power lies in the employers' hands, with only 7% of candidates in the US, UK and Ireland reporting that they think the market favors them. The vast majority believe they're facing increased competition for roles, with nearly 7 in 10 candidates across all markets saying the job market is extremely or very competitive.

And while this may seem like an opportunity for employers to move fast and hire strong talent, it's not the whole story.

For mid-market companies, the stakes are higher. You're expected to act quickly – but you can't afford to waste time on misaligned candidates, unclear job descriptions or poor candidate experiences that turn top talent away. The data tells us that candidates are wary: They've been burned by bait-and-switch roles, inconsistent communication and interviews that feel disconnected from the job they applied for.

This lack of trust doesn't just reflect poorly on individual roles – it reflects on the company as a whole. And for mid-market orgs still building their employer brand, every misstep is magnified.



Winning in a cutthroat market

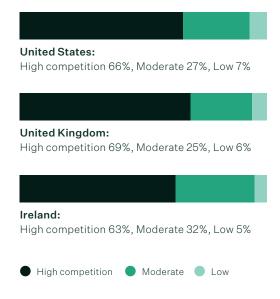
7 in 10

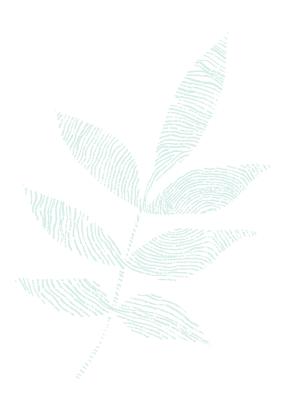
Despite continued confidence, nearly 7 in 10 candidates across all markets say the job market is extremely or very competitive (US: 66%, UK: 68%, Ireland: 63%), with more candidates than available positions.

7%

Across all three markets, only 7% of job seekers think the market favors candidates – the rest face increasing competition for roles.

Job seeker sentiment on job market competition





Winning in a cutthroat market

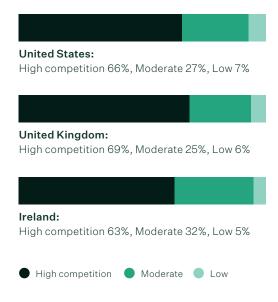
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Job seeker sentiment on job market competition





Job market obstacles

United States

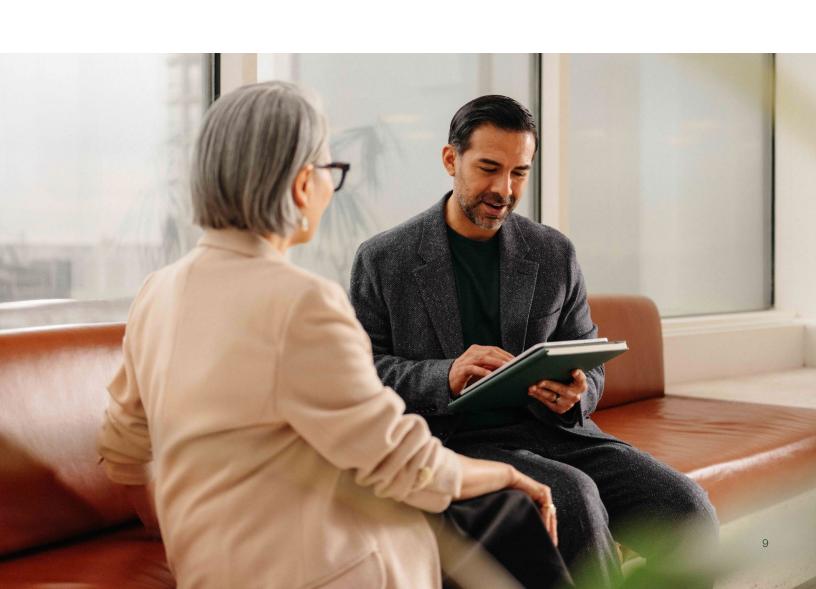
42% of US candidates cite salary differences as their biggest job search challenge. In the US, a primary challenge for Gen Z (44%) is the skills gap, while the leading challenge for Boomers is discrimination (44%).

United Kingdom

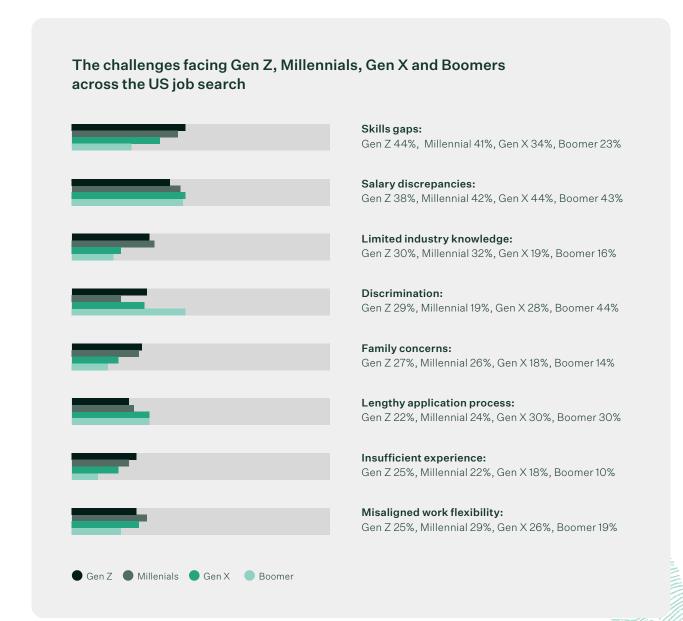
Misalignment over salary is the biggest challenge in the UK, with 43% of candidates stating that pay expectations didn't match the salary range offered. This challenge was significant for Gen Z (49%), Millennials (45%), Gen X (40%) and Boomers (37%).

Ireland

For men in Ireland, the top challenge in job searching is the skills gap (40%).



Job market obstacles



Takeaway

With great power comes great responsibility

If you're hiring right now, you're in a position of power. But for mid-market teams, that power comes with pressure – to move fast, compete with bigger brands and deliver a standout candidate experience, often with fewer resources. Treating candidates with consistency, clarity and respect isn't just the right thing to do – it's a competitive advantage that can improve your business. Here's how you can achieve success:

Create alignment before kicking off the job post

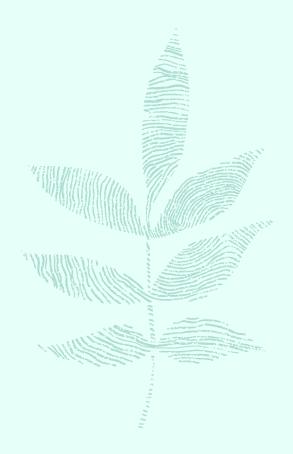
How are you addressing skills mismatches? Have you clearly defined the skills candidates need to be successful in the job and communicated those details in your job descriptions? Taking a structured approach to hiring means you've exactly defined what you're looking for before you even open a role. This helps ensure your job descriptions are aligned with your vision of success and makes it easier for candidates to apply to the roles that are the best fit.

Build equity into the process early

Discrimination is another obstacle cited by employees of all age groups. Examine your application process and look for ways to mitigate bias, whether it's by anonymizing biographical details during resume reviews or through consistent and equitable interview practices.

Remove friction, gain top candidates

Lengthy application processes were named as a top challenge amongst Gen Z, Boomer and Millennial candidates. Mid-market teams can't afford to lose candidates due to slow or repetitive processes. Simplifying application reviews with <u>automation</u>, reducing manual data entry with <u>strong reporting</u> and streamlining interviews helps you compete for top talent – even against betterknown brands.



Section 2

AI impact

Candidates express conflicting opinions about AI.

Over one-quarter of US job seekers point out the downside from their perspective, saying AI has increased competition and made it harder to stand out. At the same time, AI has become a practical tool that makes it easier to navigate the chaos of today's job market. Nearly half of job seekers (45%) are using AI to prep for interviews, and nearly one-quarter (22%) are using bots to apply to roles automatically.

Candidates are clearly confused about the ethics of using Al in the application process. On one end of the spectrum, there are candidates who are using bots to mass apply and Al assistants to help them answer live questions during interviews. Yet nearly a quarter of

candidates in the US, UK and Ireland say that using AI is theoretically acceptable, but they choose not to use it.

Candidates are also looking to employers for clarification on what's acceptable – but they're not always getting it. When it comes to the ethics of using AI in the application process, 23% of US job seekers say it's acceptable only when employers explicitly permit it, yet only 14% say most employers have explicit, clear policies. In fact, a much larger percentage – 27% of US job seekers – say they've never seen or received an employer policy on using AI tools.



AI's impact on job hunting

26%

Over one-quarter (26%) of US job seekers say Al has increased competition, making it harder to stand out.



Al impact on job search



Made it harder to stand out due to increased competition: US 26%, UK 25%, IRE 23%



Use AI for interview prep: US 45%, UK 50%, IRE 42%



Use AI agents to submit applications: US 22%, UK 17%, IRE 16%



How AI has affected job search experience in the US

Provided tools that assist their job search process: 31%

Helped discover job opportunities they wouldn't have found otherwise: 27%

Made it harder to stand out because of increased competition: 26%

Made job searching more stressful due to new skill expectations: 25%

Reduced available positions in their field: 23%

It's had minimal impact: 21%

Created new opportunities that benefit workers with their experience: 19%

Other: 1%

Candidates turn to AI tools

22%

Simultaneously, 22% of job seekers in the US are using Al agents to submit applications on their behalf.

40%

Notably, 40% of US Gen Z candidates use Al to generate work samples or portfolios compared to Millennials (30%), Gen X (22%) and Boomers (21%).

How candidates are using Al in the job search in the US

Interview prep: 45%

To analyze job postings and identify key skills they should highlight: 43%

To generate work samples or portfolios: 28%

Use Al during technical interviews to help them respond to interview questions: 24%

To network by drafting personalized connection messages: 22%

Use an Al agent to apply for jobs on their behalf: 22%

Salary negotiation and compensation evaluation: 18%

To respond to take-home assignments: 18%

Use AI during live interviews to help them respond to interview questions: 17%



The AI ethics problem

1 in 10

More than one in every ten US job seekers (13%) views AI use in live job interviews as acceptable, regardless of company policy. Over one-fifth (21%) of Gen Z candidates share this view.

27%

Despite companies being worried about Al cheating, over one-quarter (27%) of US candidates say they've never seen or received an employer policy on using AI tools.

How candidates view using AI to help during live job interviews



Completely acceptable in all circumstances: US 13%, UK 9%, IRE 12%



Acceptable only when employers explicitly permit it: US 23%, UK 22%, IRE 22%



Theoretically acceptable, but choose not to use it: US 22%, UK 22%, IRE 23%



Unacceptable - it's dishonest, and they don't engage in this practice: US 19%, UK 24%, IRE 17%



Have used Al assistance during interviews despite ethical concerns: US 3%, UK 4%, IRE 2%



Undecided about the ethics of using Al during interviews: US 12%, UK 13%, IRE 15%



Job candidates should have the same tech options as employers: US 9%, UK 8%, IRE 9%

Candidates' experience with Al policies in the job interview



Most employers have explicit, clear policies: US 14%, UK 11%, IRE 10%



Some employers have vague policies: US 25%, UK 31%, IRE 27%



Few employers address AI at all: US 21%, UK 21%, IRE 22%



They've never seen an employer policy on this: US 27%, UK 28%, IRE 33%



Not applicable to their experience: US 13%, UK 9%, IRE 8%







Takeaway

Take a stand on AI to stand out as an employer

There's a real opportunity to lead the charge as an employer by creating a clear and transparent policy on AI – both in the application process and how your own team will be using this technology.

Create clear guidelines for candidates

With so few companies lacking a stance, this is one way you can easily stand out — especially since larger employers are likely lagging behind on sharing an official point of view. Here at Greenhouse, for example, we've published <u>Guidelines for using Al in our interview process</u>, which outline the guiding principles we'd like candidates to keep in mind. Because one of our guiding principles is two-way accountability, we are also open about how our own TA team uses Al so candidates know exactly how it fits into our hiring process.

Start with strategic goals when selecting new tools

The promise of AI – boosting efficiency and streamlining manual tasks – is clearly appealing for mid-market TA teams who are constantly being asked to do more with less. Wondering where and how AI tools might fit into your own workflows? Michelle Yoshihara, Senior Manager of Talent Planning at Greenhouse, suggests starting with your strategic goals:

"There seem to be AI solutions for anything and everything. The way to ensure this is successful is to define your problem and the ideal end result before considering any tools or features. You can even carry structured hiring principles to guide your evaluation – what's the business need to solve this problem, what solution features or parameters are required to solve it and does this AI solution align with my organization's legal, security and ethical approach to AI? AI solutions are meant to tackle your real challenges, which means you have space to be discerning about what tools will and won't work for you."

It's easy to feel like you're falling behind if you haven't already adopted the latest tools, but give yourself the chance to step back and evaluate what your team, your business and your candidates stand to gain from any new technology you adopt. Taking this approach will help you cut through the noise and focus on the most impactful additions to your tech stack — a tactic that matters when your finance team is closely monitoring all expenses.

Automate with intention

Finally, it's important to consider how you're balancing automation and personalization. Can you use Al tools for automation and efficiency without compromising the candidate experience, which matters so much for mid-market companies? Michelle says it's possible by keeping the following in mind: "First, identify where a human touch is irreplaceable and protect those moments. Next, automate with intention – leverage it for repeatable actions that don't require nuance and imbue it with a human-centric approach. For example, an automated application response can still carry a warm tone that leaves candidates with a positive impression of your organization."



Section 3

The friction driving abandonment

Candidates pour a lot of time and energy into finding roles and companies that spark their interest and enthusiasm. And as a mid-market TA team, this often means going the extra mile to compete against the growth opportunities offered by startups or the stability promised by larger enterprise employers.

But all that work you put into building your employer brand can be negated by tedious and time-consuming applications. The biggest complaint that leads candidates to abandon applications across the US, UK and Ireland is being required to re-enter resume information manually.

Candidates also say multi-page applications that don't save their progress are another deal-breaker, with 38% of job seekers in the US, 41% in the UK and 36% in Ireland saying this has caused them to abandon an application they'd already started.

But it's not just subpar application experiences that are causing candidates to reconsider – 50% of US candidates say they've ghosted an employer at some point during the hiring process. The most common dropoff points include after poor communication, long delays from the employer, after a poor interview experience and after being told the salary for the role.



The friction driving abandonment

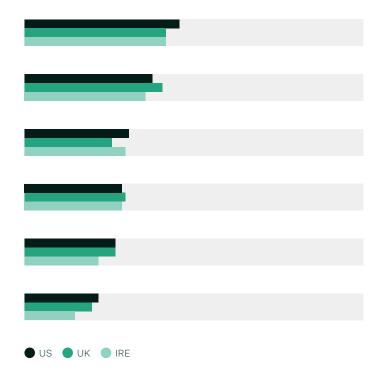
Nearly half (46%) of US candidates abandon job applications because they're forced to manually re-enter resume information.

In the US, one-third (31%) of job seekers abandon applications with no autofill, with Gen Z leading the exodus at 44% abandonment rates.

In the UK, application friction drives widespread abandonment, with 42% citing manual reentry, 41% frustrated by multi-page apps that don't save progress and 30% deterred by strict formatting requirements.

In Ireland, the same pattern emerges – 42% abandon due to manual re-entry, 36% due to unsaved progress and 29% due to broken autofill features.

What makes job seekers abandon applications?



Re-entering resume information manually:

US 46%, UK 42%, IRE 42%

Multi-page applications that don't save progress:

US 38%, UK 41%, IRE 36%

Broken autofill features:

US 31%, UK 26%, IRE 30%

Reformatting info to meet strict requirements:

US 29%, UK 30%, IRE 29%

No application status tracking:

US 27%, UK 27%, IRE 22%

Creating duplicate profiles on platforms:

US 22%, UK 20%, IRE 15%

Applicants walk away frustrated

50%

50% of US candidates have ghosted employers during the hiring process, a 14 percentage point increase since October 2023.

24%

The most common stages US candidates ghost employers were after poor communication or long delays from the employer (24%), after a poor interview experience (23%) and after being told the salary (22%).

73%

73% of Gen Z candidates in the US have ghosted employers.

51%

Over half (51%) of Irish candidates have ghosted an employer.

The stages where US candidates have ghosted employers

After poor communication or long delays from the employer: 24%

After a poor interview experience: 23%

After they were told the salary: 22%

After finding a better opportunity elsewhere: 22%

After receiving a job offer: 20%

After discovering information about the company's culture: 18%

After learning about an inadequate benefits package: 18%

Upon learning the scope of work: 17%

Upon being told the work model (hybrid, in-office, remote) was different from what was advertised: 17%

After receiving a take-home assignment: 16%

Takeaway

Speed up and steamline-or fall behind

Candidates have low confidence in the current job market and recognize that employers have the upper hand, but this doesn't mean that they're willing to go through overly lengthy or repetitive application processes. Here's how you can show that you're respecting their time and effort:

Stress-test your application process

Take this as an opportunity to review your application process from start to finish. Are there any opportunities for you to streamline or speed things up and potentially move faster than larger employers with more inefficient processes or startups with ever-changing priorities? Once candidates pass your initial application review, are you keeping the lines of communication open? Overly manual processes may be sacrificing your candidate experience. If that's the case, it's worth considering a more effective ATS that provides automated, real-time status updates that keep candidates in the loop.

"We don't need more hoops or friction; we need better signals. Just like early admissions in college show who's committed, intent will be the new differentiator in hiring."

Daniel Chait CEO of Greenhouse



Section 4

Mismatched expectations

Over a quarter of Millennials and Boomers say the job offers they've received have matched their experience level – but not their compensation expectations. This mismatch can have a ripple effect on your employer brand as dissatisfied candidates share their disappointing experiences with their networks or on sites like Glassdoor.

It's not just about misaligned expectations, either. A worrying number of candidates (nearly 72% in the US) say they've experienced a "bait-and-switch" during the

hiring process. In the US, over one-third of Millennials (36%) and Boomers (35%) say the advertised salary range was significantly higher than what they were offered. Other common "bait and switch" tactics job seekers said they faced include: the job duties are different from what's advertised, the benefits package is less comprehensive than promised or work hours or travel requirements changed.

In the US, over one-quarter of Millennials (28%) and Boomers (29%) who received job offers said they were for roles matching their experience but with lower compensation.

Boomers face the worst lowball tactics in the US, with 21% receiving offers below their experience level with reduced pay, compared to just 11-14% of other generations.

Gen Z gets the best deal in the US – 26% receive offers matching their experience with higher pay, outpacing all other generations.

Pay compression hits experienced workers hardest. While 25-29% of Millennials, Gen X and Boomers get underpaid for experience-appropriate roles, only 24% of Gen Z face this issue.



Mismatched compensation expectations

How compensation for offered roles stacks against each generation in the US

Gen Z



- Below their experience with lower pay: 14%
- Matches their experience with lower pay: 24%
- Matches their experience with similar pay: 25%
- Matches their experience with higher pay: 26%
- Above their experience with higher pay: 10%

Millennial



- Below their experience with lower pay: 11%
- Matches their experience with lower pay: 28%
- Matches their experience with similar pay: 32%
- Matches their experience with higher pay: 19%
- Above their experience with higher pay: 10%

Gen X



- Below their experience with lower pay: 14%
- Matches their experience with lower pay: 25%
- Matches their experience with similar pay: 30%
- Matches their experience with higher pay: 23%
- Above their experience with higher pay: 8%

Boomer



- Below their experience with lower pay: 21%
- Matches their experience with lower pay: 29%
- Matches their experience with similar pay: 23%
- Matches their experience with higher pay: 21%
- Above their experience with higher pay: 6%

Job postings that don't match reality

United States Nearly three in every four (72%) job seekers in the US have experienced

a "bait and switch" during the hiring process.

In the US, over one-third of Millennials (36%) and Boomers (35%) say the salary range advertised was significantly higher than what was offered.

In Ireland, nearly half (46%) of Gen Z candidates report that the benefits

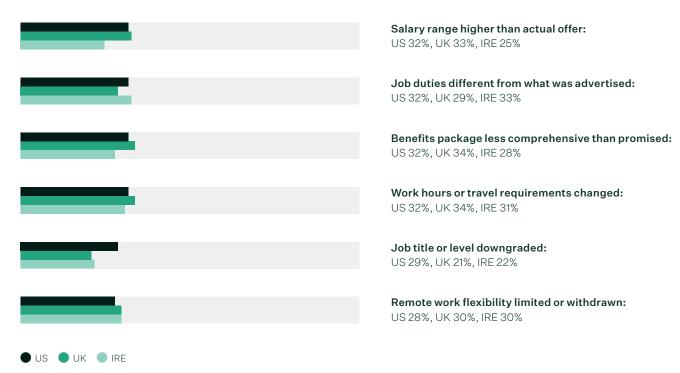
package was less comprehensive than initially presented, highlighting

how younger workers face systematic overselling.

All markets Salary deception spans all markets, affecting 32% of US candidates,

33% of UK candidates and 25% of Irish candidates.

Top "bait and switch" tactics job seekers faced in the hiring process



Takeaway

Committing to consistency pays off

Losing top-quality candidates at the end of the hiring process is something mid-market TA teams can't afford to do – literally. It's a waste of your department's time and resources, and it can hurt your employer brand once the word gets out that you're catfishing candidates. Luckily, this is a problem you can easily prevent by taking a few proactive steps.

Publish accurate pay ranges

Add more clarity and transparency to your hiring process by publishing accurate pay ranges along with your job descriptions.

Make market-informed decisions

If you're not sure how to determine your candidates' compensation expectations, take the time to look at relevant role and market data to understand the hiring landscape and build a compelling, fair and equitable compensation strategy.



Section 5

Discrimination persists

Half of candidates face discriminatory questions during the interview process. Age discrimination is most prevalent across all markets, with 31% of job seekers in the US, 28% in the UK and 18% in Ireland saying they've been asked about their age in job interviews. Boomers in the US face nearly six times the age discrimination (61%) compared to Gen Z (11%).

Some of the other common discriminatory questions candidates face are related to their health conditions and disability status, physical appearance, race or ethnicity and marital status.





Discrimination persists in the workplace

Questions

Half of candidates face discriminatory questions during the interview process – the US leading with 53%, followed closely by the UK and Ireland, which both sit at 49%.

Age

Age discrimination dominates across all markets, affecting 31% in the US, 28% in the UK and 18% in Ireland

Generation

Boomers in the US face nearly six times the age discrimination (61%) compared to Gen Z (11%), highlighting a critical generational bias gap.

Appearance

Physical appearance and health status questions are pervasive, with 22% of US candidates being asked inappropriate questions about appearance and disability status.

Ireland

Ireland shows unique patterns with health/ disability questions (21%) being most common, while parental status questions (19%) rank higher than age discrimination. The top discriminatory and biased interview questions candidates in the US face are based on:



Takeaway

Know better, do better

Unstructured and open-ended interviews put your company in a tricky position, creating an inconsistent and biased candidate experience. These interviews might feel more casual and personalized, but really, they're preventing your team from making data-driven decisions and can be a deal-breaker when candidates feel your hiring team is being discriminatory. Here's what to do instead:

Limit bias through structured interviews

One of the easiest ways to eliminate discriminatory questions is through <u>structured interviews</u>. When you've clearly defined the purpose of each interview and the questions each hiring panel is expected to cover, you reduce the chances that interviewers will go off script and end up asking discriminatory questions, which can put your company at risk for legal and compliance issues.

"Discrimination allows qualified candidates to slip through the cracks and erodes trust. Transparency, communication and fairness are not optional; these characteristics are a competitive advantage for employers."

Paaras Parker Chief People Officer at Greenhouse

Make interview training mandatory:

At the very least, your TA team should train interviewers so they know which topics are absolute no-nos during the interview process. To further streamline hiring, interview training can cover how to use interview scorecards and remind interview teams of their benefits, such as creating an equitable interview experience for all candidates, limiting the role of bias in decision-making and increasing your chances of finding someone who will be successful in the role (not to mention protecting your company from potential discrimination lawsuits!).



Conclusion

Structure and strategy should be part of every hiring decision

Every decision counts for a mid-market TA team.

Losing candidates to slow or clunky application processes, mismatched role or compensation expectations or discriminatory questions during the interview process won't just hurt you in the short-term. These missteps can tarnish your employer brand and prevent you from meeting critical business goals down the road.

When your organization was smaller and scrappier, you might have been able to ignore some of these issues because you had more urgent fires to put out.

But having a consistent and repeatable hiring process (that's also equitable and efficient) has to become a priority if you want to continue to scale.

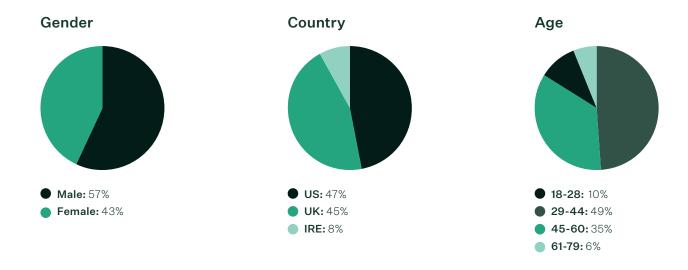
If you're committed to making hiring your competitive advantage and creating the best possible candidate experience, Greenhouse can help you take a structured, strategic and candidate-centric approach to hiring.

<u>Learn more</u> about how Greenhouse has everything you need to meet hiring goals and scale strategically.



Survey methodology

Greenhouse, the leading hiring platform, surveyed more than 2,200 full-time workers and temporarily unemployed job seekers from the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland.





greenhouse

Greenhouse is the leading hiring platform to help companies get measurably better at hiring. Our Al-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