



hireclix[®]

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

JUNE 2025

ABOUT HIRECLIX

HireClix is a global recruitment marketing agency that provides full agency of record and strategic talent acquisition consulting services to help clients achieve their recruiting and employer branding goals. HireClix offers recruitment advertising agency services including programmatic media buying, contract negotiations, campaign management and creative services. Additionally, HireClix built its strategic consulting practice to support talent acquisition executives as they navigate overall strategy, recruitment technology, process optimization, program development and many other challenges in today's recruitment marketplace.

HireClix was founded in 2010 with a focus on helping clients get the best overall return on investment for their recruiting dollars and continues to be the fastest growing recruitment advertising agency in the industry, advertising in 40+ countries around the globe for a diverse group of enterprise clients.

Learn more at www.hireclix.com

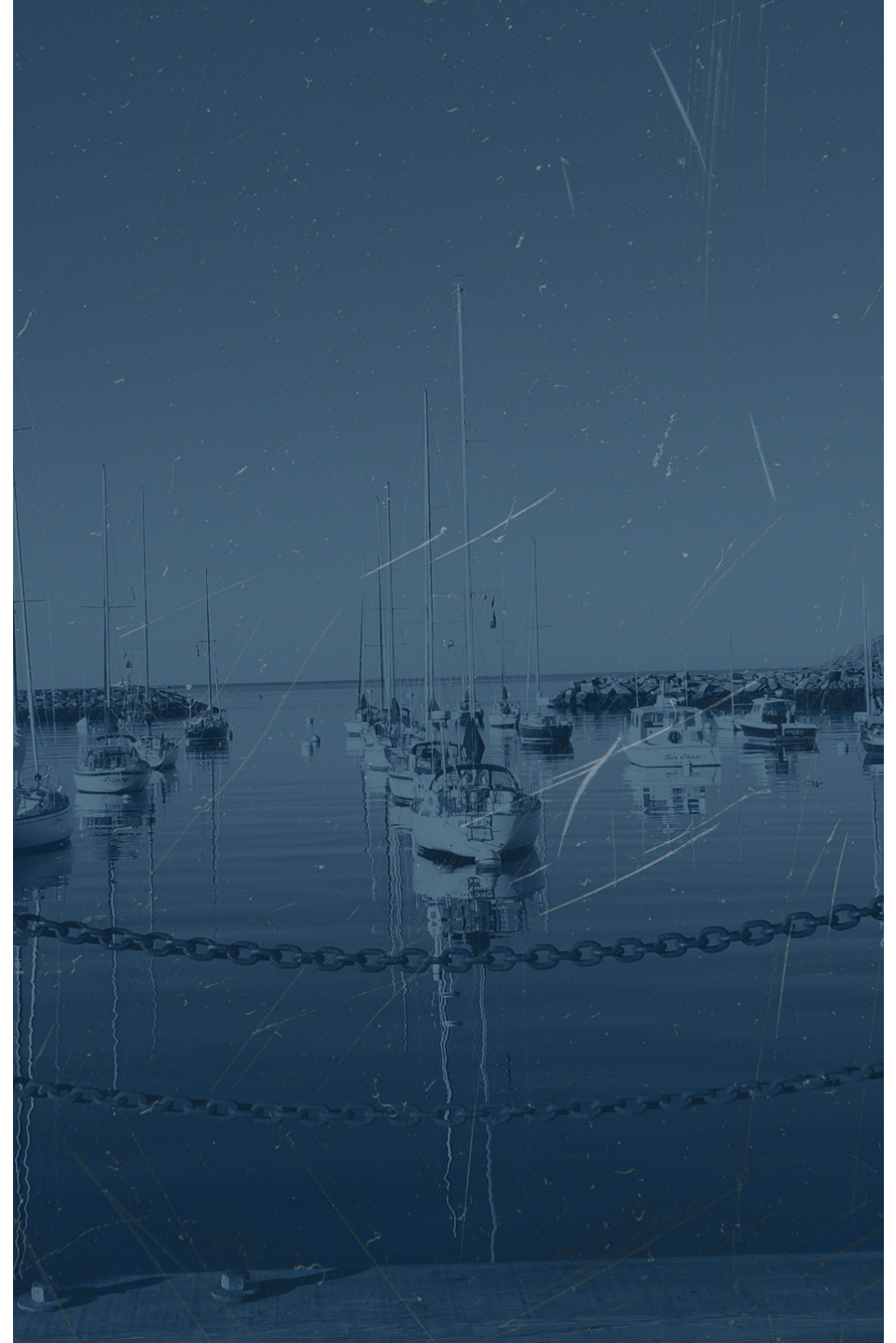


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EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY

The talent market continues to shift in new and unexpected ways. As HR leaders, talent acquisition professionals, and hiring managers work to attract and retain the right people, they're navigating a workforce that is more research-driven, values-focused, and digitally connected than ever before.

At HireClix, our mission remains the same: to help our clients adapt to this evolving landscape and achieve their hiring goals with confidence. In 2025, we're seeing continued pressure from both economic uncertainty and talent shortages. Baby Boomer retirements are accelerating, Gen Z is entering the workforce with different expectations, and AI is rapidly reshaping how both employers and candidates approach the hiring process.

This year's Candidate Experience Survey explores key shifts in how people look for work, from the rising influence of career sites and social platforms to changing behaviors around mobile use, application drop-off, and social media research. We also examined how emerging generations evaluate culture, DEI, and employer reputation across every touchpoint—from a job ad to a company's Instagram feed.

One of the most critical takeaways this year is the growing need for organizations to revisit and clearly articulate their employee value

proposition (EVP). With candidates researching your brand across multiple channels, consistency and authenticity are non-negotiable. Your EVP should serve as the foundation of your employer brand, guiding everything from your career site content to your ad creative, social posts, and beyond.

As always, we use this research to help guide our clients in optimizing their recruitment marketing strategies—refining media spend, investing in better candidate experiences, and amplifying brand stories in the places talent actually looks.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this year's findings. We hope this data gives you actionable insight into today's candidate mindset, and we invite you to connect with us to learn how HireClix can support your hiring goals.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Costa', with a stylized, flowing script.

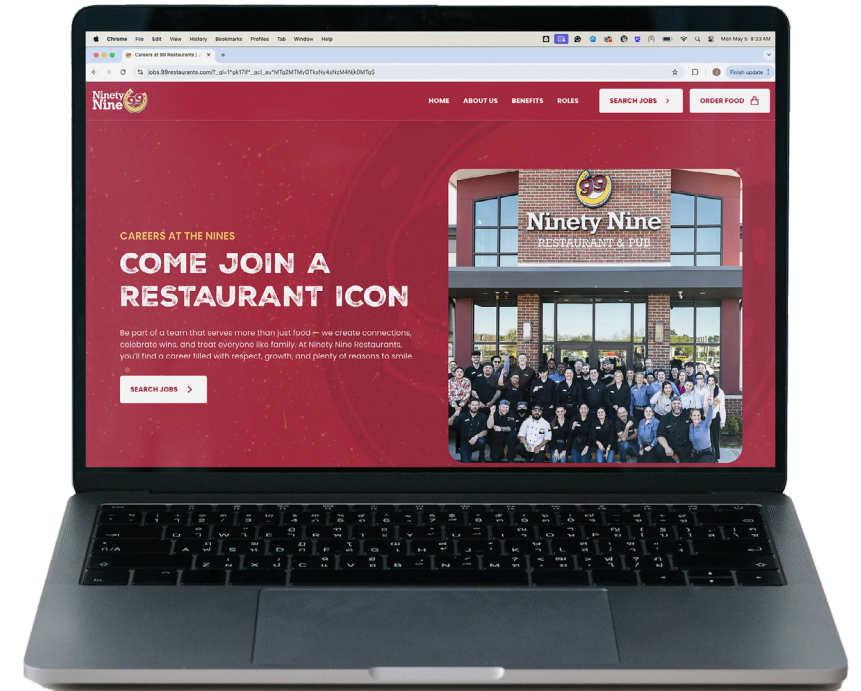
Neil Costa
Founder & CEO

KEY TRENDS

THE IMPACT OF CAREER SITES ON RECRUITING IN 2025

Imagine delivering a candidate experience that mirrors what consumers expect from top tier e-commerce sites: fast, intuitive, and engaging. Today's career sites must do more than simply list open roles. They need to be fully optimized for mobile, deliver compelling content that matches candidate expectations, and guide users through an intuitive, frictionless application journey. A well-optimized, strategic site is essential to meeting candidates where they are and turning curiosity into action.

According to the 2025 CX Survey, career sites have emerged as one of the most trusted resources for job seekers, alongside platforms like LinkedIn. As candidates increasingly prioritize employer brand and experience, a clunky or outdated site can quickly turn them away. A high impact career site offers a unique opportunity to tell your story, highlight your culture, and give candidates a clear, authentic window into your organization.



HireClix elevates your digital presence with custom career sites designed for **user experience, mobile responsiveness, SEO, and employer brand storytelling.**

KEY TRENDS

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EMPLOYER BRANDING

Social media plays a pivotal role in shaping how candidates perceive potential employers, especially on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn. According to the 2025 CX Survey, job seekers, particularly younger generations, are increasingly drawn to authentic and engaging content that provides a genuine look into a company's culture and values. A strong social media presence, aligned with your Employer Value Proposition (EVP) creative, ensures consistent storytelling across channels and reinforces your employer brand in a way that resonates with your target audience.

In today's digital-first landscape, impactful creative isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a necessity. **When executed well, EVP-aligned content helps your brand cut through the noise, leave a lasting impression, and stay top of mind when candidates are ready to apply.** This strategic approach to social media not only drives awareness but also builds trust and connection with top talent where they spend their time.



HireClix helps employers turn their EVP into powerful, shareable content through strategic social media and our Employer Brand Network. We craft stories that **connect, engage, and elevate your brand.**

KEY TRENDS

THE POWER OF EVP ALIGNMENT IN ATTRACTING THE RIGHT TALENT

In a competitive hiring landscape, a clearly defined and consistently communicated Employer Value Proposition (EVP) is essential to building trust and attracting candidates who align with your mission, values, and culture. When EVP messaging is carried through across all touchpoints, from career sites and social media to job descriptions and onboarding materials, it reinforces a cohesive brand narrative that resonates with top talent.

Candidates today are looking for more than just a job, they want to work for companies that reflect their values and purpose. According to the 2025 CX Survey, **job seekers are more likely to engage with and apply to organizations that demonstrate authenticity and consistency in how they present themselves.** Aligning your EVP with creative content, career site strategy, and social media presence ensures your employer brand is not only compelling but credible.



Your EVP is your talent brand in action. HireClix brings it to life with **bold creative, unified messaging, and seamless integration** across your career site, social media, and campaigns showing candidates who you are and why it matters.

FROM SEARCH TO SOCIAL: WINNING THE BATTLE FOR TALENT

HOW JOB SEEKERS DISCOVER EMPLOYERS

As the job market continues to evolve, so do the ways job seekers engage with opportunities, making it crucial for employers to understand how candidates discover and research companies. Today's job seekers are increasingly relying on career sites and trusted platforms like LinkedIn to inform their decisions highlighting the growing importance of a strong employer brand, effective SEO strategies, and a dynamic social media presence. This shift underscores the need for consistent, strategic messaging across all channels to connect with top talent.

WHERE CANDIDATES START THEIR SEARCH

Recent data reveals a shifting landscape in where job seekers are turning when considering new opportunities. **In 2025, the top resources are: Indeed: 56%, LinkedIn: 52% (which has increased from 40% in 2023), Google: 41%, Corporate Career Sites: 40% (which has increased from 28% in 2023), ZipRecruiter: 32%, Facebook: 27%.**

Ensure your employer brand messaging and job opportunities are **visible, authentic, and optimized** across the platforms candidates trust most.



From Search To Social: Winning The Battle For Talent

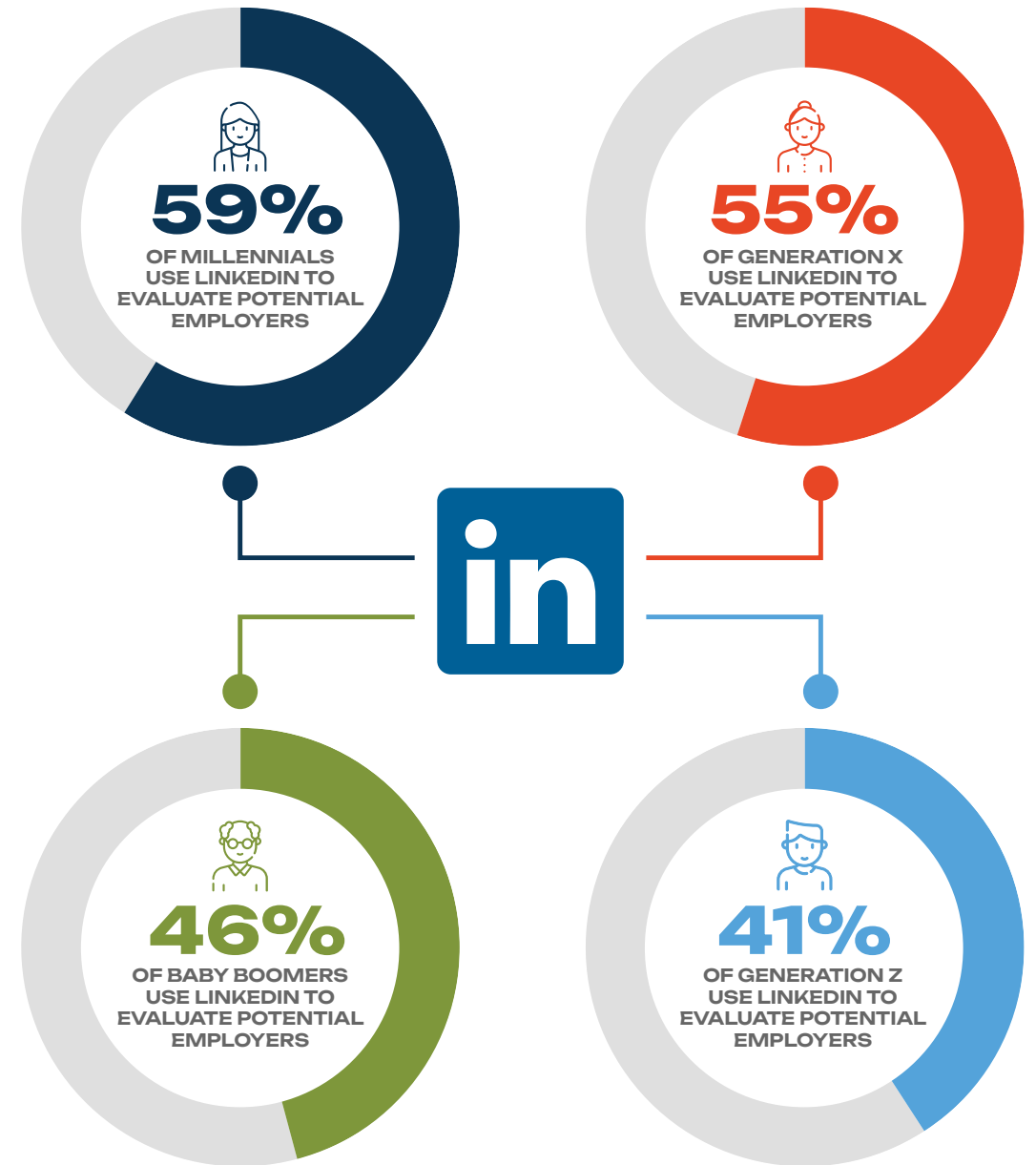
WHY YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION MATTERS

In today's hiring landscape, job seekers expect transparency, credibility, and a strong digital presence from potential employers. **More than half (57%) of all job seekers say online reviews influence their decision to apply or accept a job offer, making platforms like Glassdoor and Indeed critical tools in shaping your talent pipeline.**

Likewise, a strong LinkedIn presence is essential, with candidates turning to company pages to assess culture, values, and growth potential. If your brand appears outdated or inactive, top talent may move on without applying.

In 2025, Millennials (59%) lead the way in using LinkedIn to evaluate potential employers, followed by Gen X (55%), Baby Boomers (46%), and Gen Z (41%). While usage varies across generations, it's clear that today's tech-savvy job seekers expect employers to maintain a strong, up-to-date presence on LinkedIn.

A strong employer brand shaped by your **social presence, authentic storytelling, and employee advocacy** is essential to stand out in today's competitive talent marketplace.



From Search To Social: Winning The Battle For Talent

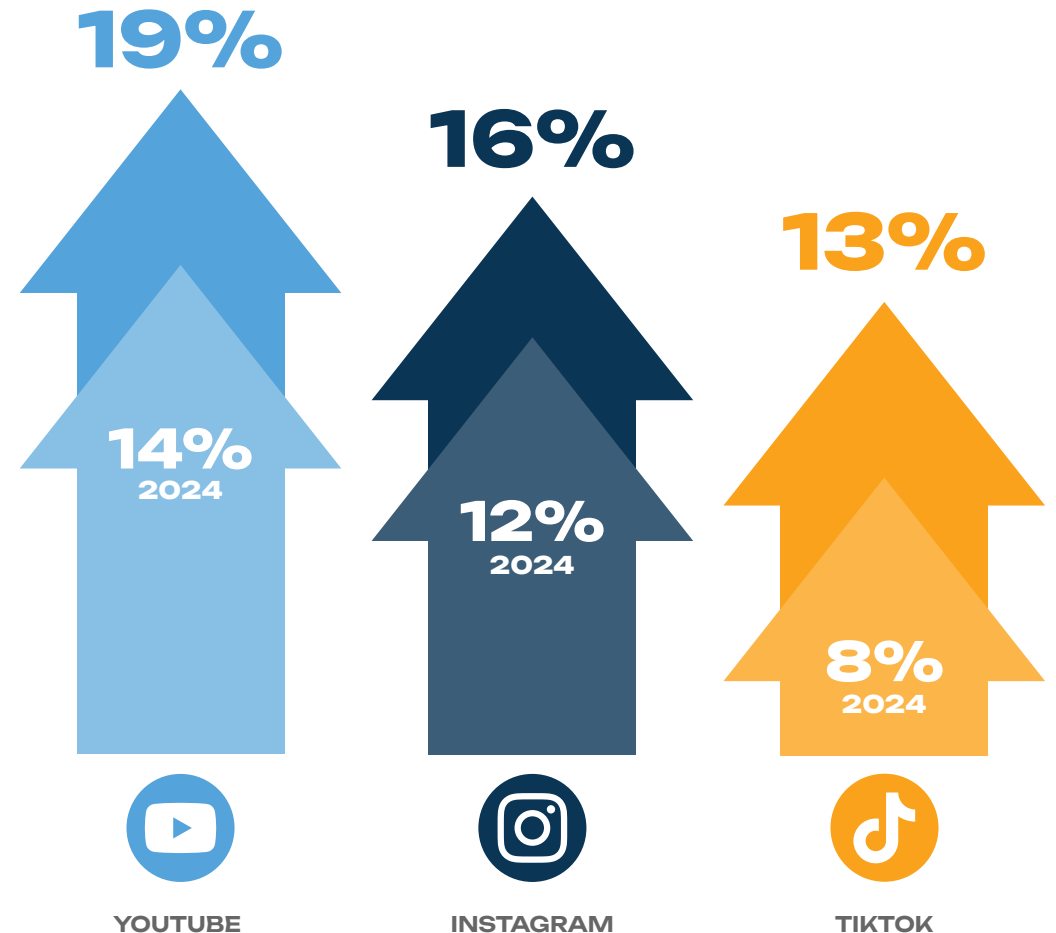
THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TA

While traditional job platforms like Indeed (46%), LinkedIn (44%), and Google (28%) still lead in job ad visibility, social media is quickly catching up and bringing new opportunities for connection to job seekers.

Job ad engagement across social media has grown significantly year over year, with YouTube increasing 35% (from 14% to 19%), Instagram 33% (from 12% to 16%), and TikTok 63% (from 8% to 13%).

This increase reflects a broader shift in how candidates - especially Gen Z and Millennials - consume job content. **Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have moved beyond brand awareness to become critical tools for engaging with talent where they already spend their time.**

Job ad engagement is rising on social because candidates want **authentic, creative content** where they already spend time. "Set-it-and-forget-it" strategies no longer work.



THE EVOLVING CANDIDATE JOURNEY

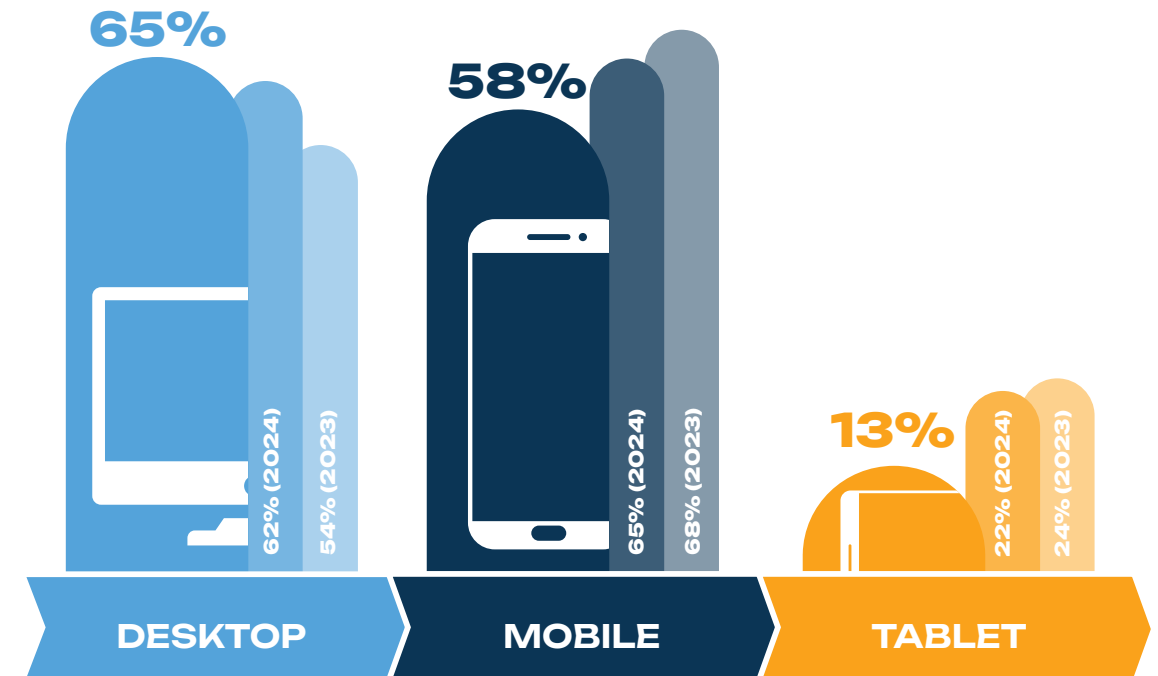
ENGAGING THE MODERN JOB SEEKER

As the job search journey continues to evolve, so do the tools and behaviors that define how candidates engage with potential employers. In 2025, we're seeing a notable shift: while mobile once dominated the candidate experience, desktop usage is on the rise, signaling a more intentional, research-driven approach to job seeking.

Today, 65% of candidates use computers to search for jobs (up 11% since 2023), while mobile usage has declined to 58% (down 10%). Even Gen Z (75%) and Millennials (77%), long considered mobile-first generations, are leaning more heavily on desktop.

This shift signals a more intentional job search, with candidates spending more time researching employers and comparing opportunities. In today's cautious job market, many prefer the control and focus that desktop devices offer when completing applications.

This shift mirrors a broader digital behavior trend. As noted in a recent [Wall Street Journal article](#), Millennials often prefer desktops for significant decisions, like booking flights or purchasing furniture, due to the greater sense of control and security. That same mindset may now be influencing how candidates approach the job application process.



To compete for top talent, your candidate experience must be **built for impact as well as speed** across every device.

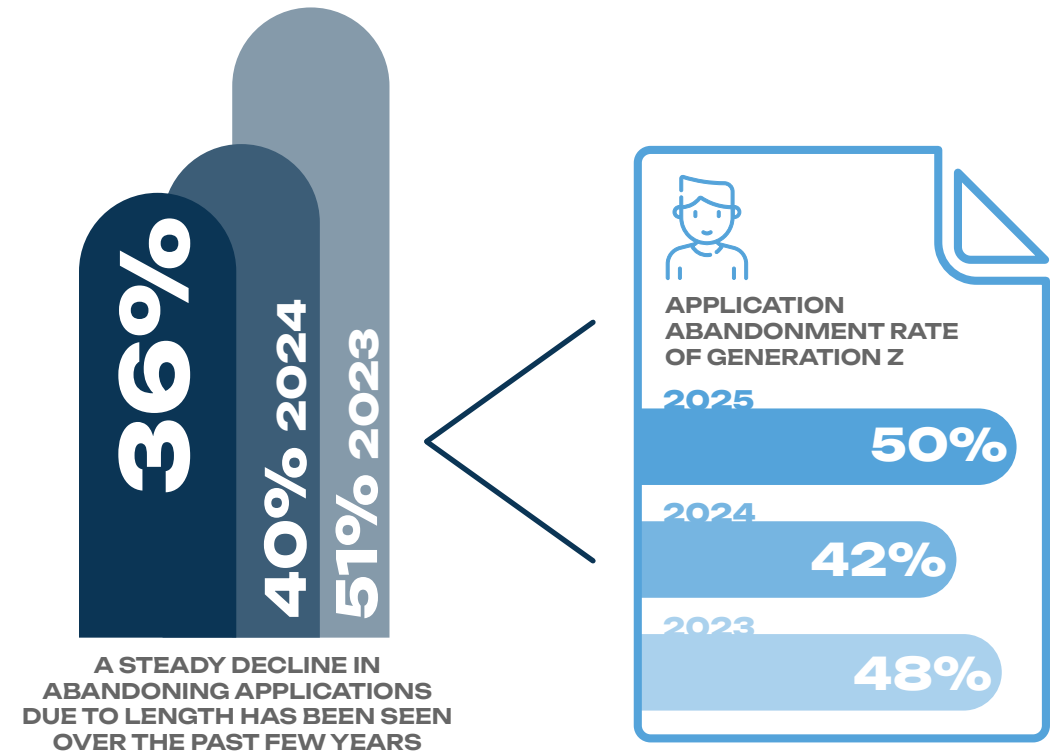
The Evolving Candidate Journey

REDUCING APPLICATION ABANDONMENT

A downward shift in application abandonment rates suggests that candidates may be adapting to longer applications out of necessity, especially in a job market that's increasingly competitive and selective. **In 2025, 36% of job seekers reported abandoning applications due to their length. While still significant, this marks a steady decline from 40% in 2024 and 51% in 2023.**

Younger candidates, particularly Gen Z, are highly sensitive to lengthy application processes. Even in a competitive job market, they continue to expect speed, simplicity, and a user-friendly experience. A long or complicated process can quickly discourage them from completing an application.

The decline in abandonment rates may signal that candidates are taking job searches more seriously, motivated by economic uncertainty and concerns about job stability. While candidate resilience appears to be increasing, it should not come at the expense of a positive experience. Streamlining the process, eliminating unnecessary steps, and optimizing for both desktop and mobile can significantly reduce drop off rates and increase conversions.



Companies should streamline their application processes by investing in quick apply functionality, especially for younger candidates where a **quicker, simpler application** can significantly improve engagement.

The Evolving Candidate Journey

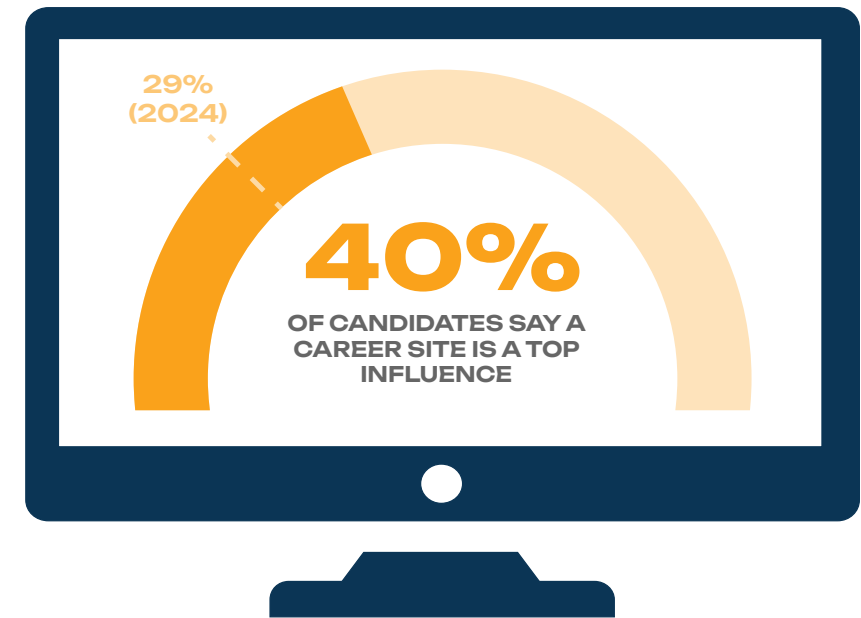
CAREER SITES MATTER MORE THAN EVER

In 2025, career sites have solidified their role as one of the most critical touchpoints in the candidate journey. In today's talent-driven market, a company's career site is a powerful gateway to understanding a company's culture, values, and overall employee experience. It's crucial to make a strong impression on potential candidates.

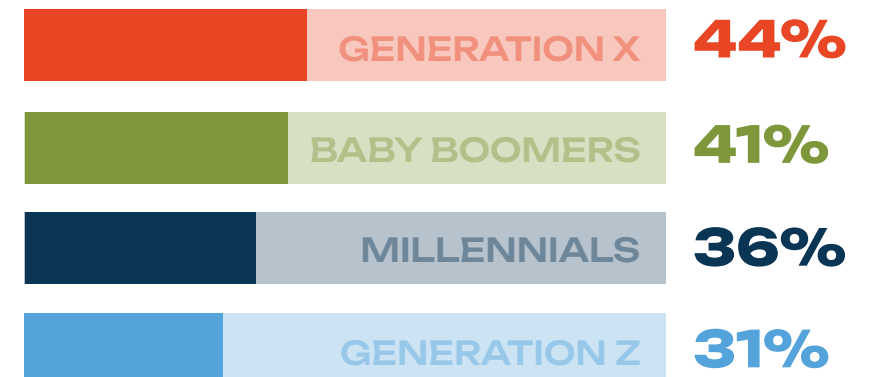
While this trend is not new, career site influence has grown 38% year over year. **In 2025, 40% of job seekers said a company's career site is a top source of influence, up from 29% in 2024.** The data shows this influence is even stronger among older generations, with Gen X (44%) and Baby Boomers (41%) more likely to rely on career sites than Millennials (36%) or Gen Z (31%).

A clunky or outdated site can quickly turn off potential applicants, while a sleek, responsive, and thoughtfully designed career site can inspire action and deepen trust. As mobile preferences continue to shape user behavior, it's essential that career sites function seamlessly across all devices and do more than just list open roles. They should tell a compelling story, guide candidates through the application journey, and showcase what makes the organization stand out.

Companies that invest in **modern, user-centric career sites** will be better positioned to attract and convert top talent transforming casual browsers into committed applicants.



THE DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN:



UNDERSTANDING WHAT DRIVES CAREER MOVES

RETENTION RISKS ARE RISING

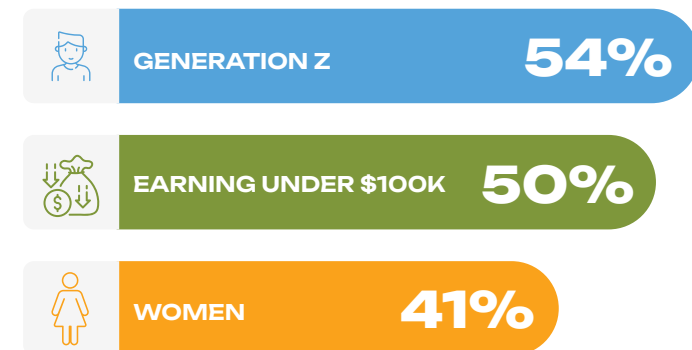
Employee retention remains a significant challenge in 2025, with 38% of employees planning to leave their current employer. This is an increase from last year, where 32% of employees indicated they were considering leaving.

The groups most likely to leave this year are women (41%) and younger workers (Gen Z at 54% and Millennials at 47%), as well as those earning under \$100k (50%). This points to an increasing need for companies to focus on addressing the concerns of these groups, which include growth opportunities, pay equity, and overall organizational culture.

Employers must address the priorities of younger, lower earning employees with **growth opportunities, pay equity, and work life balance** to stay competitive and retain top talent.



HIGHEST RISK GROUPS OF LEAVING



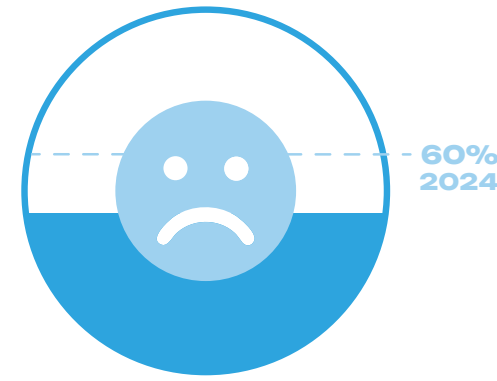
Understanding What Drives Career Moves

WHY EMPLOYEES ARE WALKING AWAY

The reasons people choose to leave their current jobs in 2025 mirrors the challenges from last year, but with a slight shift in emphasis. In 2025, 44% of employees report leaving because they no longer enjoy their work, a significant decrease from 60% in 2024. More people are prioritizing lack of growth opportunities (31%) and work/life imbalance (32%) when considering a departure, both of which were also top concerns last year.

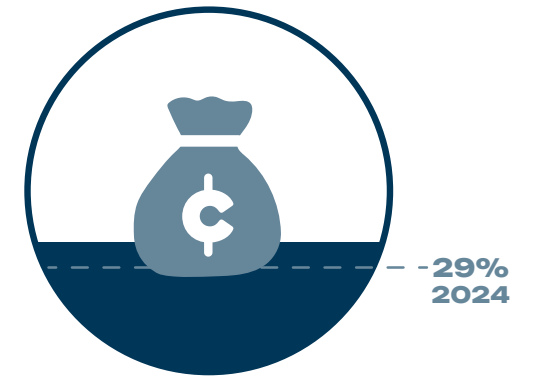
A notable factor in 2025 is the impact of insufficient raises and bonuses as 36% of employees cite this as a reason for leaving, up from 29% in 2024. This increase highlights the need for fair and timely compensation adjustments, as employees are unwilling to stay with organizations that do not meet their financial expectations.

With **dissatisfaction around growth and compensation**, companies must be proactive to avoid losing top talent.



44%

NOT ENJOYING WORK



36%

INSUFFICIENT RAISE/BONUS



32%

WORK/LIFE IMBALANCE



31%

LACK OF GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding What Drives Career Moves

TOP REASONS EMPLOYEES CHOOSE TO STAY

When looking at the reasons employees choose to stay with their current employer, job enjoyment and work/life balance remain dominant factors. In 2025, 78% of employees stay because they enjoy the work they do, a slight increase from last year's figure of 73%. Additionally, work life balance named by 46% of employees, has become less of a perk and more of a standard expectation in the post-pandemic workplace. What was once considered a nice-to-have is now a baseline requirement for many employees evaluating long-term fit.

A significant shift this year is the growing importance of competitive pay: **45% of employees stay because of competitive compensation, which is a sharp rise from 27% in 2024.** This increase underscores the continued need for employers to offer compensation packages that align with market expectations and employee needs. The rise in this factor suggests that pay is becoming an increasingly critical pillar of retention strategies, particularly as inflation and economic pressures continue to impact employees' financial well being.

Employees stay for job enjoyment, but now **prioritize competitive pay** reflecting the growing importance of compensation in retention.



Understanding What Drives Career Moves

EVOLVING MOTIVATORS
ACROSS GENERATIONS

Generational differences continue to play a significant role in why employees stay or leave their current roles. Gen Z and Boomers prioritize strong relationships with managers and job enjoyment for engagement and satisfaction. Millennials focus on growth and competitive pay, driven by career advancement and financial security, while Gen X values work/life balance alongside compensation.

One of the key insights this year is the **increasing importance of culture, mentorship, and advancement opportunities for younger employees, particularly Gen Z and Millennials**. These groups are more likely to leave if they do not see a clear path for growth or if the company culture is not aligned with their personal values. This trend echoes findings from last year, where younger generations expressed dissatisfaction with organizations lacking clear career progression. To retain young talent, companies must not only offer competitive pay but also create environments where growth and mentorship are prioritized.

Tailored **retention strategies and strong leadership development programs** are crucial to retain younger workers.

WHAT MATTERS TO DIFFERENT GENERATIONS	 GENERATION Z	 MILLENNIALS	 GENERATION X	 BABY BOOMERS
JOB ENJOYMENT	✓			✓
COMPETITIVE PAY		✓	✓	
GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES		✓		
WORK/LIFE BALANCE			✓	
RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGERS	✓			✓

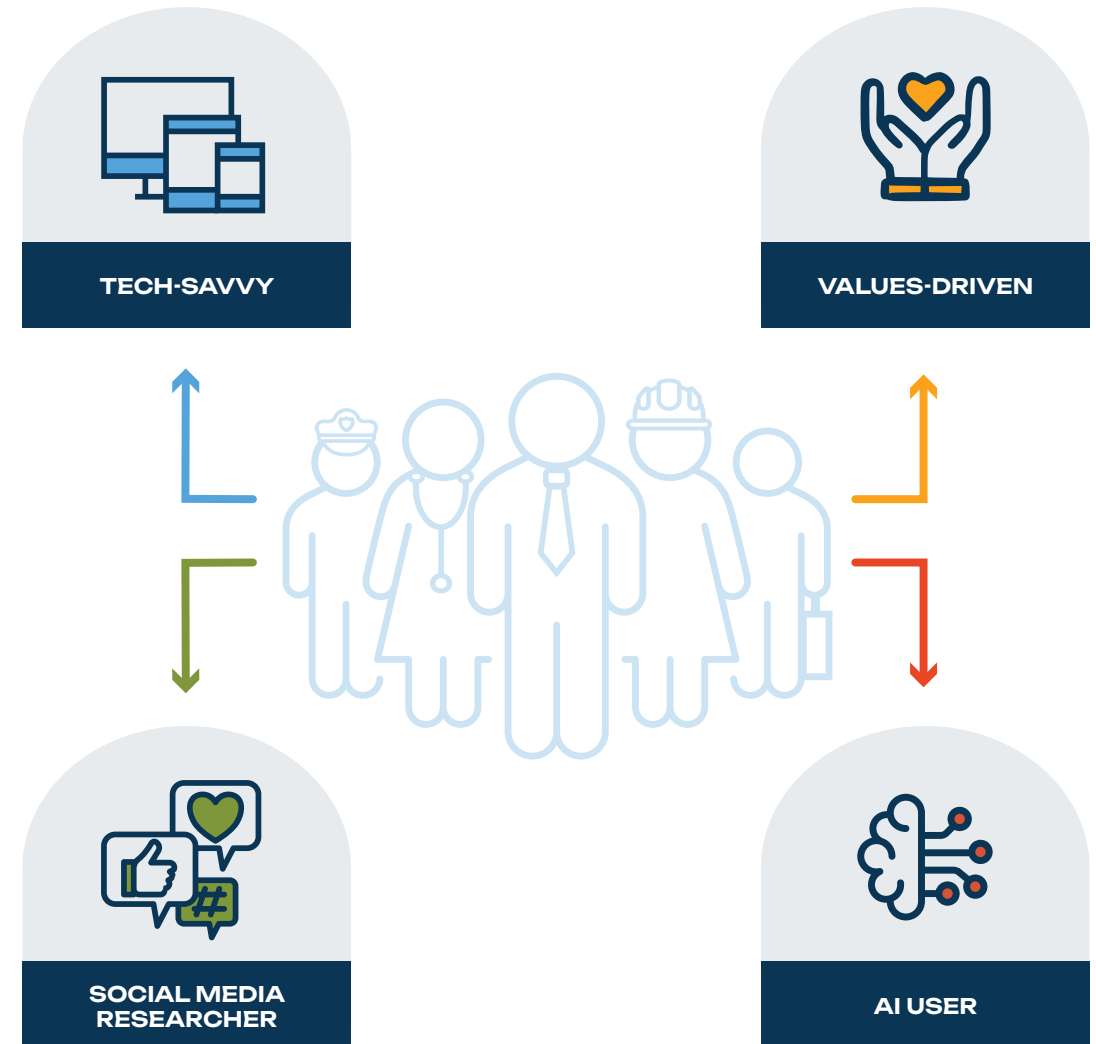
REDEFINING TALENT ATTRACTION

HIRING IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Today's job seekers are more intentional, tech savvy, and values driven than ever before. Younger generations are embracing AI to streamline their job search while turning to social media to evaluate company culture, DEI efforts, and leadership representation. Hybrid work models have emerged as the preferred return-to-office solution, especially among younger, more educated candidates.

While hiring innovation is welcomed, concerns around AI - including lack of personalization, data privacy, and ethical implications - emphasize the need for thoughtful implementation. As expectations continue to shift, employers must stay aligned with what matters most to today's talent.

Balancing innovation with **authenticity and flexibility will be critical** to building strong connections and successful recruitment outcomes.



ARE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION IMPORTANT ANYMORE?

As the workforce continues to evolve, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) remains a core value for many job seekers, especially among younger generations. While half of all candidates say DEI factors into their job decisions, a clear generational divide is emerging in how it's prioritized.

When asked which aspects of DEI matter most, candidates ranked pay equity as the top priority (42%), followed by diverse leadership and representation (40%), and inclusive hiring and promotion practices (37%).

Younger job seekers are leading the charge, with 70% of Gen Z and 63% of Millennials saying DEI is important when evaluating job opportunities. In contrast, only 42% of Gen X and 33% of Boomers consider DEI important and nearly one-third of Boomers (29%) say it doesn't influence their job decisions at all.

Younger candidates demand **transparency, equity, and representation** not just in mission statements, but in practice.



Redefining Talent Attraction

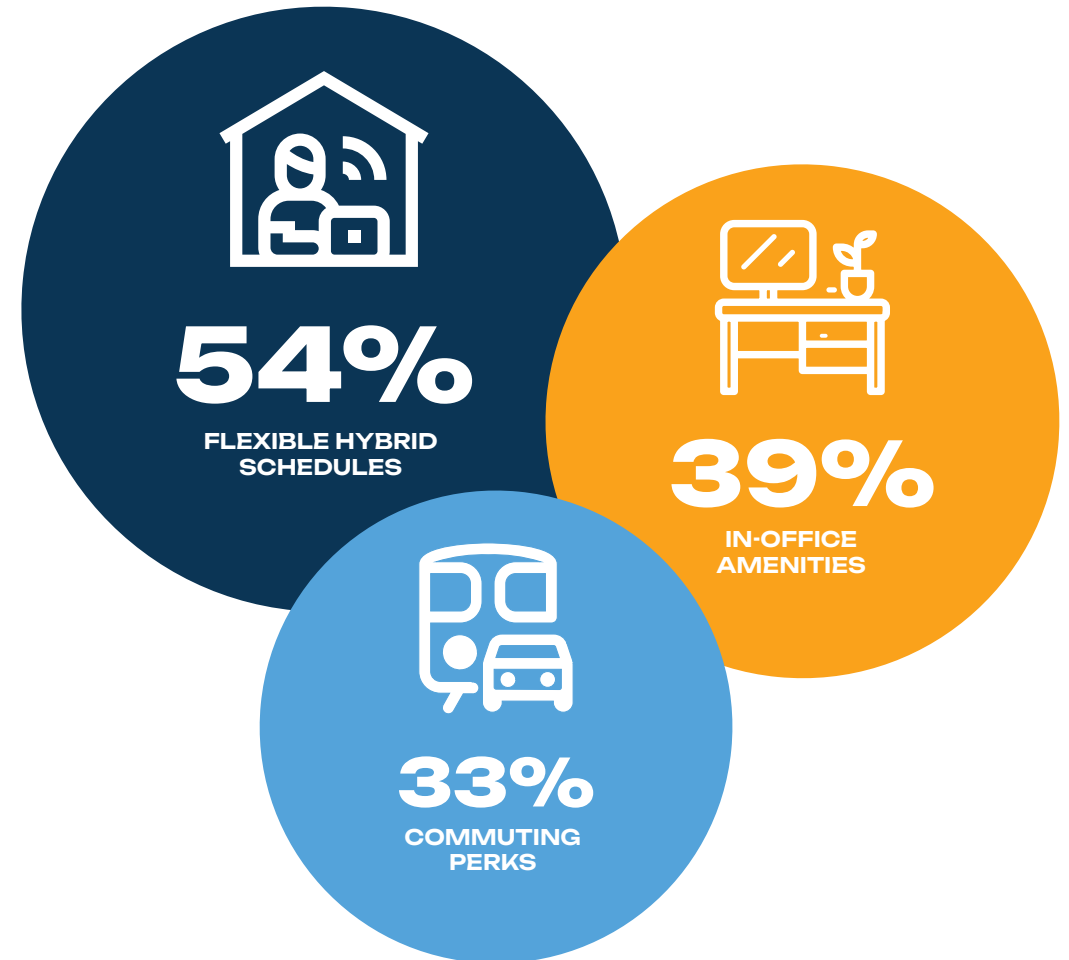
FLEXIBILITY DRIVES RETURN-TO-OFFICE DECISIONS

As the workforce redefines its relationship with the office, return-to-office (RTO) policies are no longer deal breakers for most but preferences vary significantly across age, education, and employment status. **Just 12% of candidates say they would reject a job that requires in-office work, while 31% are open to it if the role feels like the right fit.**

When asked what would make returning to the office more appealing, respondents highlighted flexible hybrid schedules (54%), better in-office amenities (39%), and commuting perks like parking or transit subsidies (33%).

Younger workers are leading the demand for flexibility, with 24% of Millennials and 22% of Gen Z favoring hybrid work models. In contrast, Baby Boomers are least affected by RTO requirements, 41% say office mandates have no impact on their job decisions at all.

While most job seekers won't reject an in office role, **flexible hybrid schedules and commuting perks** are critical to making return-to-office work.



Redefining Talent Attraction

SOCIAL MEDIA SHAPES FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Social media has become a critical part of the modern job search, offering candidates a window into company culture, values, and authenticity. Today's job seekers want to see real engagement, community involvement, and a workplace that reflects their values.

Candidates want to see a mix of content on company social channels, including job postings and career advice (32%), community involvement and social responsibility (32%), employee spotlights and company culture (19%), and industry insights or thought leadership (17%).

This trend is especially strong among younger and more diverse candidates. **More than half of Gen Z and Millennial candidates now review a company's social media presence before applying, using it to evaluate whether an employer aligns with their expectations and ideals.**

Your social media showcases your employer brand. Today's candidates use it to **gauge culture, values, and inclusion** before they apply.



AI ENTERS THE JOB SEARCH

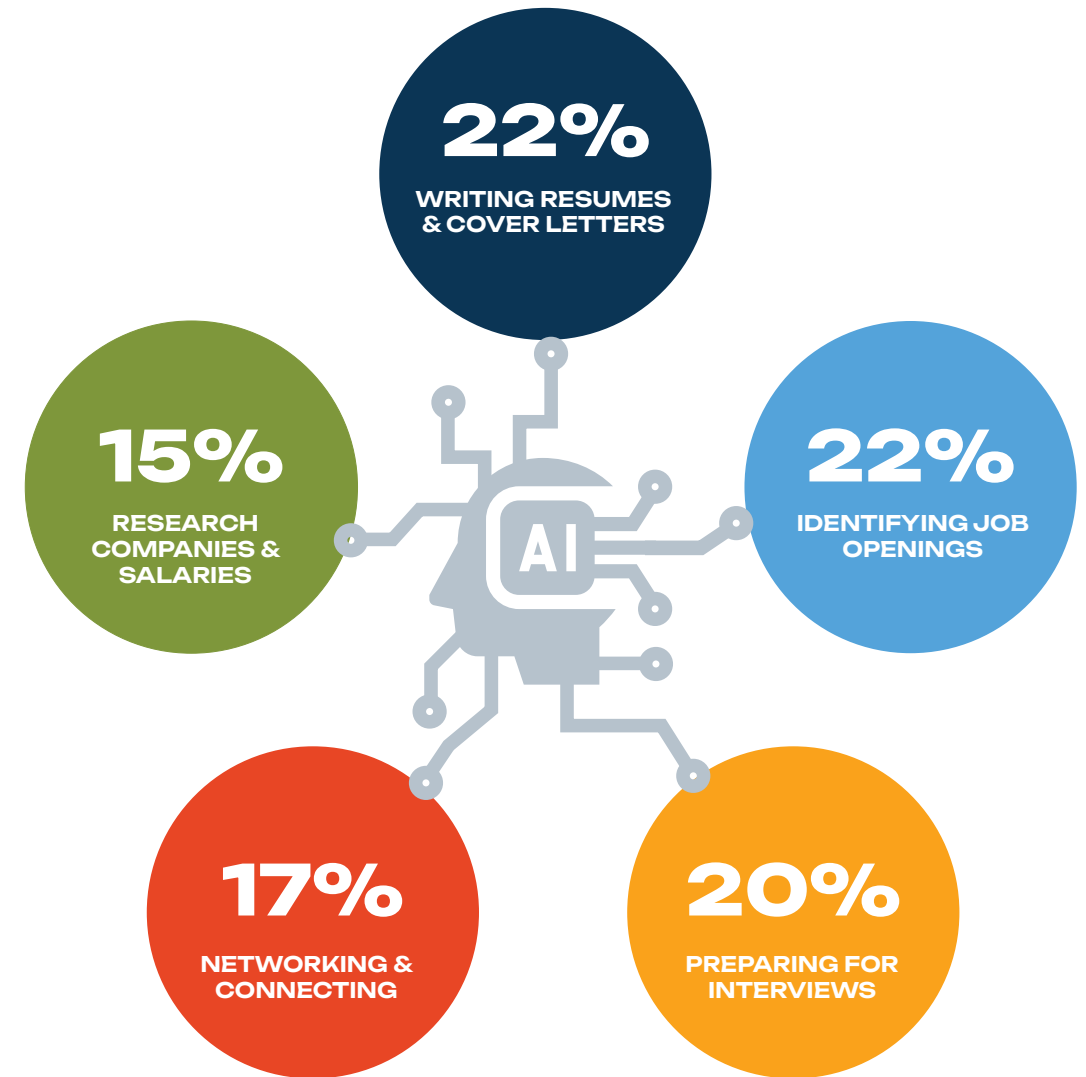
Artificial Intelligence (AI) is beginning to reshape the job search experience, offering candidates new tools for efficiency and strategy.

While more than half of job seekers (54%) say they don't currently use AI in their search, those who do are tapping into it for everything from networking support to application writing.

Among those leveraging AI in their job search, the most common uses include writing resumes and cover letters (22%), identifying relevant job openings (22%), preparing for interviews through mock sessions or suggested responses (20%), networking (17%), and researching companies and salary benchmarks (15%).

Despite growing adoption, concerns about AI in hiring remain as 39% of candidates worry that AI-driven applications feel too generic and lack personalization. Another 36% are concerned about privacy and how their data is used, while 34% question the fairness and transparency of AI in the hiring process.

Job seekers are using AI to **sharpen resumes, prep for interviews, and build networks** to gain a competitive edge in today's market.



THANK YOU

The candidate landscape is extremely complicated. How consumers interact with your employer brand and the influencing factors that go into their decision to search, apply and ultimately stay with your organization can vary greatly depending on a variety of factors.

It's important to have the right partner to help you navigate an evolving recruitment marketplace to determine the most effective and efficient strategy to achieve your hiring objectives. HireClix can help you with all the pieces that make up this complex puzzle.

Our team of experts can help with everything that impacts the candidate experience from:

- Defining your employee value proposition (EVP)
- Developing a compelling career site
- Promoting your job ads through key sites, leveraging programmatic technology
- Strategically marketing your employer brand across consumer sites
- Streamlining your talent acquisition operations and candidate experience
- And so much more

We'd love to continue the conversation and understand how we can help create a custom talent acquisition strategy for your organization.



SURVEY DETAILS

Survey results show how consumers prefer to engage with prospective employers and which factors influence their career decisions, giving employers key insights to effectively engage talent. These findings are based upon data collected from a consumer survey capturing 1,000 respondents ranging from ages 18 to 65+ across the United States. This analysis involved examining the data by generation, given the diverse workforce comprising four generations, each with distinct preferences and characteristics.

HireClix highlighted findings from its Candidate Experience (CX) Survey, revealing consumer preferences about where and how they make career decisions. The data highlights how consumers find and search for job opportunities, what factors affect their decision to leave or stay with their current employer, and the outside influences that can positively or negatively impact their decision to apply and engage in the hiring process with an organization.





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