Arcavia Consulting

TALENT INSIGHTS

Four roles in a construction talent team

Head of TA, TA manager, TA leader and sourcing specialist: what each seat owns, the skills it draws on and how many years in recruitment it usually takes to reach.

817
in-house recruiter profiles at 150 UK construction employers

9.6 yrs
median time in recruitment on appointment to head of TA

5.2 yrs
for the recruiter and sourcing tier

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Who does what in a talent team

Four seats, and the order most careers move through them.

We profiled 817 in-house recruiters at 150 UK construction employers, and 794 of them carry a dated career history. Titles in talent acquisition are an unreliable guide to the work: the same title means a head of function in one business and a senior recruiter in the next. This guide sets out how the work divides between the four seats we are asked about most, the skills each one draws on and how long people in each seat had spent in recruitment when they were appointed.

The head of TA owns the function. The TA manager runs a team or a division and partners its leadership. The TA leader is the experienced recruiter who carries the hardest hiring projects end to end, and the sourcing specialist finds the candidates that every other seat depends on.

01

Head of TA / TA director

Head of talent acquisition, head of resourcing, TA director

Owns the function, the budget and the workforce plan.

9.6
median years in recruitment at appointment

02

TA manager

Talent acquisition manager, recruitment manager, resourcing manager

Runs a team or a division, and partners its leadership.

8.9
median years in recruitment at appointment

03

TA leader

TA lead, lead recruiter, senior talent acquisition partner

An experienced recruiter who runs hiring projects end to end.

7.9
median years in recruitment at appointment

04

Sourcing specialist

Talent sourcer, resourcer, talent acquisition specialist

Finds the people, and knows where they sit.

5.2
median years in recruitment at appointment

Years in recruitment, counted across agency, RPO and in-house roles, at the start of the person's current role. Medians across 732 dated careers in the four tiers; the sourcing figure covers the whole recruiter and advisor tier.

Head of TA / TA director

Owns the function, the budget and the workforce plan.

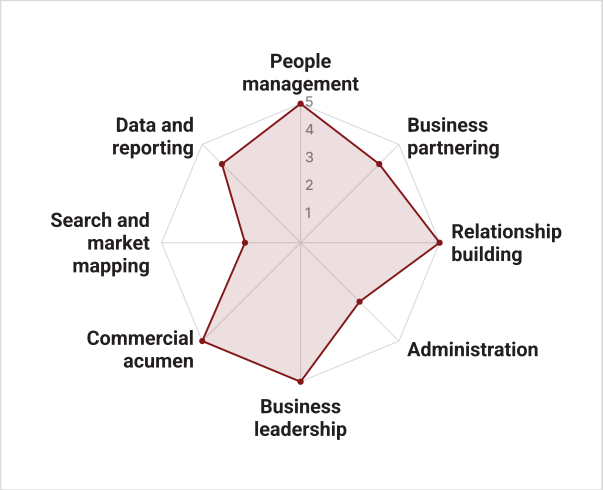
The head of talent acquisition owns recruitment for the business: the team, the agency budget, the applicant tracking system and the sourcing licences. The role usually reports to the HR director or chief people officer, and in the strongest functions it sits close enough to the board to shape headcount before it is approved.

Most of the work is planning. The head of TA reads the order book and the bid pipeline and turns them into a workforce plan, decides which roles the team delivers directly and which go to agencies, sets the terms of the preferred supplier list and makes the case for the spend. They tend to step back into delivery only for director-level hires.

Employer branding usually sits here too: the careers site, early careers and how the business presents itself on LinkedIn.

The lower scores for administration and search describe the seat, not the person. Most heads of TA came up as recruiters, but the role is rarely operational or in the detail of hiring: it is department management, business leadership and stakeholder relationships.

SKILLS PROFILE



Our assessment of the role, scored 1 to 5 on each arm.

YEARS IN RECRUITMENT AT APPOINTMENT

9.6

Median. The middle half sit between 6.3 to 16.6 years.

APPOINTED FROM WITHIN THE FIRM

58%

Of those whose current role followed an earlier one on record.

HAVE WORKED AGENCY-SIDE

51%

At any point in their career, across 59 dated careers.

MEASURED ON

- Cost per hire and total agency spend
- Share of hires made through direct sourcing
- Time to hire across the business
- New-starter retention at twelve months

USUAL NEXT STEP

Group head of talent, HR director or chief people officer

Typical titles: Head of talent acquisition, head of resourcing, TA director.

TA manager

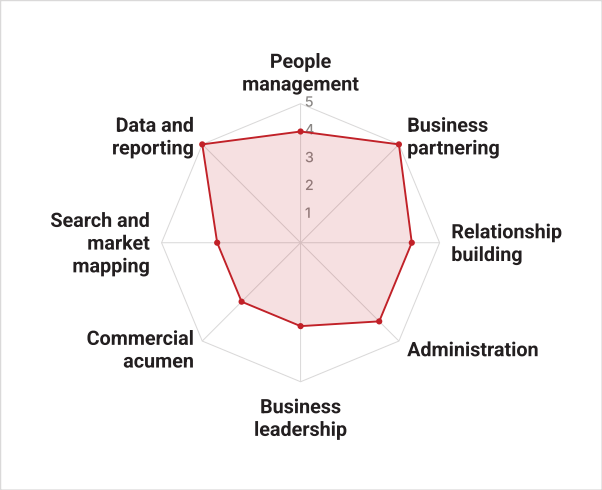
Runs a team or a division, and partners its leadership.

The size of the business decides which version of this job you get. In a team of two or three, the TA manager is the most senior recruiter and runs the function in all but name. In a larger function, they lead a division or a region, with a small team of partners and recruiters reporting to them.

Business partnering defines the role. A strong TA manager sits in the divisional leadership meeting, knows which bids are close to award and starts hiring before the contract is signed. They challenge a specification that asks for a project manager when the scheme needs a project director, benchmark salaries before the role goes live and agree the interview process with the managing director or operations director.

They manage the people who deliver the hires, set the priorities across the live roles and decide when a search goes to an agency.

SKILLS PROFILE



Our assessment of the role, scored 1 to 5 on each arm.

YEARS IN RECRUITMENT AT APPOINTMENT

8.9

Median. The middle half sit between 6.1 to 12.8 years.

APPOINTED FROM WITHIN THE FIRM

52%

Of those whose current role followed an earlier one on record.

HAVE WORKED AGENCY-SIDE

61%

At any point in their career, across 177 dated careers.

MEASURED ON

- Time to hire and offer acceptance across the division
- Hiring manager satisfaction
- Agency spend within the division
- Delivery and retention of their own team

USUAL NEXT STEP

Head of TA, or a larger division

Typical titles: Talent acquisition manager, recruitment manager, resourcing manager.

TA leader

An experienced recruiter who runs hiring projects end to end.

The TA leader is a senior individual recruiter. They rarely manage people, although they often coach the recruiters around them, and they carry the hardest and most visible hiring the business has.

Their work is usually a recruitment project in its own right. Take Dragados staffing schemes such as Euston and the Immingham Eastern Ro-Ro Terminal: project, commercial, planning and site teams have to be in place on the client's programme, with a deadline, a headcount target and someone accountable for both. The TA leader owns that from the brief to the first day, including the sourcing plan, the interview process, the offer and onboarding.

They partner at project level rather than divisional level, which means working directly with project directors and commercial leads who need the hire made, often against a start date that is already fixed.

SKILLS PROFILE



Our assessment of the role, scored 1 to 5 on each arm.

YEARS IN RECRUITMENT AT APPOINTMENT

7.9

Median. The middle half sit between 4.7 to 11.5 years.

APPOINTED FROM WITHIN THE FIRM

45%

Of those whose current role followed an earlier one on record.

HAVE WORKED AGENCY-SIDE

65%

At any point in their career, across 151 dated careers.

MEASURED ON

- Hires delivered against the mobilisation plan
- Time to hire on each project
- Offer acceptance
- Hires still in post after probation

USUAL NEXT STEP

TA manager or business partner

Typical titles: TA lead, lead recruiter, senior talent acquisition partner.

Sourcing specialist

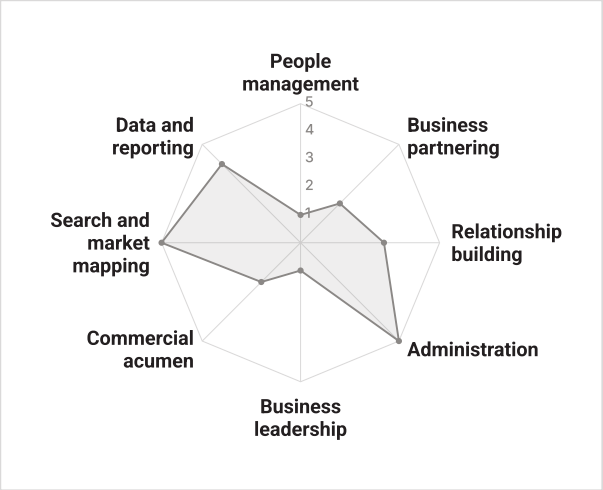
Finds the people, and knows where they sit.

The sourcing specialist finds candidates. The toolkit is LinkedIn Recruiter, Boolean search, the talent pool already held in the ATS and maps of competitor teams, followed by outreach that gets a passive candidate to take a first call. They screen and hand a qualified shortlist to the TA leader or manager, who owns the hiring manager and the offer.

In construction, sourcing time goes on the roles agencies charge most for and job boards rarely fill: planners, estimators, commercial managers, and project managers with the right sector background for a particular scheme. The best sourcers know which contractors have just finished a job, whose framework has been renewed and where a planning team might be free in three months' time.

Only three of the 817 profiles in our panel carry a sourcing title. The work is done every day across the recruiter and advisor tier, and a dedicated sourcing seat usually appears once a team is large enough for one person to feed several partners.

SKILLS PROFILE



Our assessment of the role, scored 1 to 5 on each arm.

YEARS IN RECRUITMENT AT APPOINTMENT

5.2

Median. The middle half sit between 3.3 to 8.5 years.

APPOINTED FROM WITHIN THE FIRM

30%

Of those whose current role followed an earlier one on record.

HAVE WORKED AGENCY-SIDE

62%

At any point in their career, across 345 dated careers.

MEASURED ON

- Shortlists delivered against the brief
- Outreach response rate
- Share of hires that came through direct sourcing
- Time from brief to shortlist

USUAL NEXT STEP

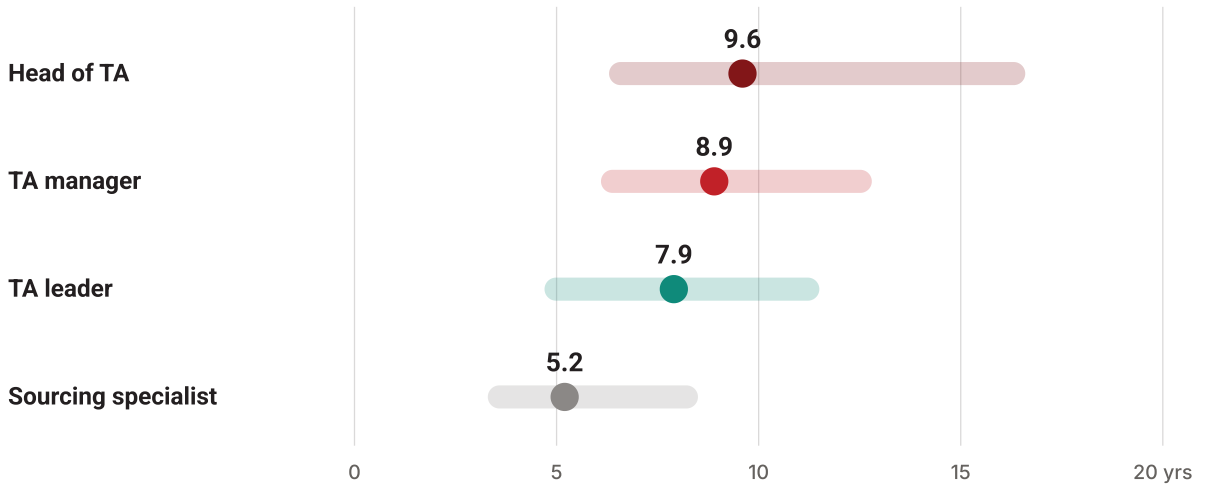
TA leader, or a partner role

Typical titles: Talent sourcer, resourcer, talent acquisition specialist.

How long it takes to reach each seat

Around five years to the recruiter tier, nearer ten to head of TA.

YEARS IN RECRUITMENT AT APPOINTMENT TO THE CURRENT ROLE



Dot: median. Bar: the middle half of each tier (25th to 75th percentile). 794 dated careers; years counted across agency, RPO and in-house roles.

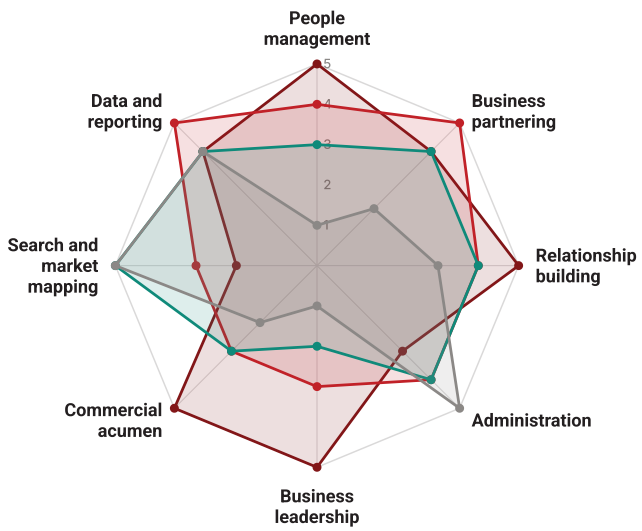
The median head of TA had spent 9.6 years in recruitment when they took the role, against 5.2 years in the recruiter and sourcing tier. The two middle steps sit close together: TA leaders were appointed at 7.9 years and TA managers at 8.9, which reflects how often people move between the two rather than through them in order. A senior recruiter with a large project behind them can step into a manager's seat, and a manager in a small team often carries the same hiring load as a TA leader.

The ranges are wide. A quarter of heads of TA were appointed with 6.3 years or fewer, often in a smaller business or after an internal promotion, while another quarter had more than 17 years behind them. The first in-house manager title arrives at a median of 6.1 years in recruitment, across 299 people who have held one.

Agency experience is common at every level: between 51% and 65% of each tier have worked agency-side at some point. Promotion from within also rises with seniority, from 30% in the recruiter tier to 58% of heads of TA, so the route to the top of the function runs more often through one employer than through a series of moves.

The skills profile side by side

Leadership and commercial weight rise with seniority. Search and administration run the other way.



SKILL	HEAD OF TA	TA MANAGER	TA LEADER	SOURCING SPECIALIST
People management	5	4	3	1
Business partnering	4	5	4	2
Relationship building	5	4	4	3
Administration	3	4	4	5
Business leadership	5	3	2	1
Commercial acumen	5	3	3	2
Search and market mapping (added)	2	3	5	5
Data and reporting (added)	4	5	4	4

Our assessment of each role, scored 1 to 5, drawn from the briefs we have worked on for in-house teams. These are not measured from the panel. The last two arms were added to the six most often used to describe these roles, because without them the sourcing specialist's core skill does not register and nothing captures the reporting that every seat now carries.

How we read the panel

Public profiles, read title by title.

THE PANEL	817 public professional profiles of people working in-house in recruitment, talent or resourcing at 150 UK construction employers, collected in September 2026. 794 carry a career history with dates.
THE TIERS	Each current title was given a seniority band. Head of TA is the head and director band; TA manager the manager band, including associate and deputy managers; TA leader the senior and lead individual recruiters; the sourcing figures cover the recruiter and advisor band. Coordinators and entry roles are left out.
SOURCING	Only three titles in the panel name sourcing, so the sourcing specialist's figures describe the recruiter and advisor tier that does most of the sourcing work, not sourcing titles alone.
TIME TO ROLE	Years in recruitment at the start of the current role, counting agency, RPO and in-house roles. Medians and quartiles throughout; a career with no dates is left out of every timing figure.
TA LEADER	Our first paper in this series used "TA leader" for the head of the function. This guide follows the titles the market uses, where TA lead and TA leader are senior recruiter roles, and calls the head of function the head of TA.
SKILLS	The skills scores are our assessment, not a measurement, and are labelled as such wherever they appear.
ACCURACY	Public profiles are self-reported and can be out of date or incomplete. We have tested the reading, but it will not be right for every individual.

The employers in the panel

150 UK construction employers, listed alphabetically.

AKT II
Altrad
AmcoGiffen
Amentum
Amey
Aureos
Babcock Rail
Bachy Soletanche
Baily Garner
Balfour Beatty
Barhale
Bechtel
Bethell Group
Bilfinger UK
Black & White Engineering
Bond Global
Bouygues UK
Bovis Construction
Brand Energy & Infrastructure Services
Breedon Group plc
Burns & McDonnell
Buro Happold
BUUK Infrastructure
BW: Workplace Experts
Caddick Group
Carey Group
Central Rail Systems Alliance
Chevron Traffic Management
Civil Works Alliance
Clancy
Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (on behalf of Korn Ferry)
Colas
Costain
CPW
Cumming Group UK & Europe
Cundall
Currie & Brown
Dodd Group
Dornan
DPR Construction
Dragados UK & Ireland
Eiffage Kier
Eiffage Kier Ferrovial BAM (EKFB)
Enerveo
Equans UK & Ireland
Farrans Construction
FCC
FCC Construcción
Ferrovial Construction UK
Fluor Corporation
FM Conway Ltd
Fortem Solutions
FulkersBaileyRussell
Galldris Group
Galliford Try
Geobear Global
Gleeson Homes
Glencar
Graham
Great British Energy - Nuclear
Hargreaves Services plc
Hilson Moran
Hilti Great Britain
Hoare Lea
HOCHTIEF (UK) Construction Ltd
Howard Civil Engineering
Ian Williams Ltd
ISG
Jackson Civil Engineering
JN Bentley
John Sisk & Son
Johnston Carmichael Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers
Joseph Gallagher Limited
JRL Group
KAEFER UK & Ireland
KBR
Keltbray
Kier
Kilnbridge
Knights Brown
Lagan Aviation & Infrastructure
Laing O'Rourke
Linesight
M Group
Mabey Hire
Mace
ManpowerGroup
McAleer & Rushe
McCarthy & Stone
McDermott Building and Civil Engineering Ltd
McLaren
McLaughlin & Harvey
MEH Alliance
Morgan Sindall
Mount Anvil
Multiplex
Murphy Geospatial, a Woolpert Company
Murphy Group
NG Bailey
Omexom UK
Parsons Corporation
Pell Frischmann
Phoenix ME
Pick Everard
Reds10
Rider Levett Bucknall RLB
Ridge and Partners LLP
RLB Euro Alliance (part of Rider Levett Bucknall)
Robertson
Royal BAM
RSS Infrastructure Ltd
Sacyr UK & Ireland
Saint-Gobain UK & Ireland
SES Engineering Services
Severfield
Sir Robert McAlpine
Site Recruitment Ltd
Skanska Costain STRABAG Joint Venture
Skanska UK
Spencer Group
Spencer Riley
Statom
STRABAG UK
Systech
Talent Solutions UK
Tarmac
Tclarke
Teach First
Tilbury Douglas
Tony Gee and Partners
Trant Engineering Ltd
TSL
Turner & Townsend
UKR Group
Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield
United Infrastructure Ltd
untypical
VINCI
VolkerWessels UK
Vp plc
VVB Engineering
Walker Sime
Walter Lilly
Walters
Waterman Aspen
Wates
Willmott Dixon
Wills Bros Group
Winvic
WPS

Every employer at which we identified at least one in-house recruitment professional. A further seven profiles in the panel of 817 carry no employer and sit outside this list.

Arcavia Consulting

ABOUT US

Specialist recruitment
across design and construction

Arcavia Consulting is a specialist recruitment firm for the design and construction market in the UK, Europe and the United States. We recruit for contractors, consultancies and design practices through executive search and strategic hiring, embedded recruitment, project recruitment and market intelligence.

Executive search and strategic hiring

Experienced headhunters for strategic and leadership roles. We work as an embedded consultant to the hiring business, which keeps us closely aligned with its leadership and its plans while we keep a clear view of the external market.

Embedded recruitment

Specialist recruiters placed inside your organisation, to cover a gap in the team or to add capacity through key hiring periods.

Project recruitment

Dedicated support on volume requisitions for design and construction businesses, on both a contract and a permanent basis.

Research and market intelligence

We take pride in producing market intelligence and research that is genuinely useful to the design and construction community, and to the TA and HR teams that hire for it.

Building your talent team? Talk to us.

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