

# Recruiter Capability Key Insights Report

**Understanding the skills and  
behaviours needed for inhouse  
recruiters for 2020 and beyond**

# Data sources

Information contained this report has been obtained from one primary source:

## Online Questionnaire February and March 2019

A request to complete 8 questions online was distributed to all members of The FIRM. Where possible, circulation was restricted to those individuals who were primarily involved in resourcing related activities (as opposed to generalist HR, L&D etc.). In all, 280 questionnaires were fully completed and returned for analysis.

# Foreword

## Hello and welcome to this report on Recruitment and Talent Acquisition Capability and Training.

Thanks first to everyone who participated in the survey as it is your data that has enabled us to create the insights. We know how busy your roles are and we are hugely grateful for your time and input.

We hear from our members every day that Recruitment and Talent Acquisition capability and training is a hot topic. Discussions and presentations on this topic are always popular, and the response rate for this piece of research certainly suggests the same.

### So why is this the case?

It would seem fair to suggest that the ever-changing nature of our industry is a key driver.

The speed of change in technological advancements, the advent of AI and the political and financial uncertainties being faced by us all, means that the focus on recruiting the very best talent has never been stronger.

And the skills we want that talent to have are changing. More 'human' skills grounded in cognitive ability are fast becoming the differentiating ones, as we move to a world where the need to work alongside automated digital solutions are greater than ever before.

Recruitment and Talent Acquisition folk are quickly having to adapt, in order to find slicker quicker ways to get to the talent before their competitor does.

It is no longer just about finding new talent either. Alongside the age-old essentials of Employer Branding and EVP, it is also about retaining the best talent through well-crafted D&I, mobility and selection approaches.



It is our hope that this report will give members a view on what this all means for working in TA and recruitment. Which capabilities are seen to be the highest priority, and whether the skills we are now having to recruit for are reflected in those we need to develop ourselves.

**Rachel Dalboth**  
Strategy and Capability Director  
The FIRM

# Key Findings

## Training and capability as a 2019 priority

We asked our respondents to what extent is recruitment /talent acquisition capability a focus for them or their team in 2019.

### To what extent recruitment training and capability is a priority for individuals and teams



Only 14% do not consider training and capability for themselves and/or their team to be of importance this year, perhaps related to the extent to which they rate their own capability which we explore later in the report, or because it has already been a focus for them in the previous 12 months.

The remaining 86% consider it to be a priority, with 50% calling it out as a big priority for them and their teams.

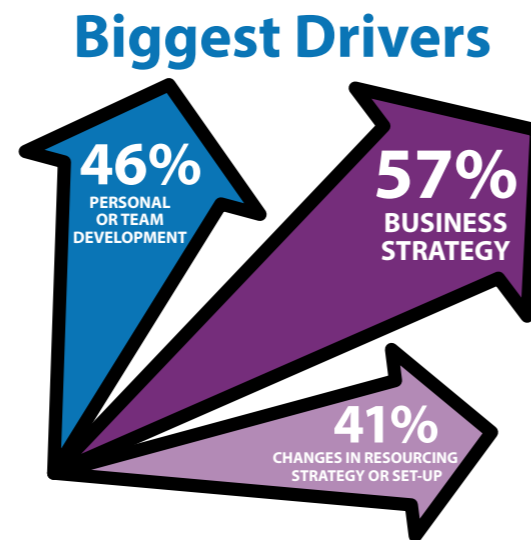
This is encouraging to see, given that 22% of those who participated in the FIRM's Strategic

Talent Acquisition research in 2018 cited that the competence and capability of the existing in-house recruitment team was a barrier to the delivery of an optimal recruitment solution for their organization.

### The driving force behind the need

When asked what is driving the focus on training or capability building within resourcing and Talent Acquisition, it would seem that the top two drivers are business strategy, with 57% of respondents citing this, and personal or team development, called out by 46% of those who were surveyed.

41% agree that changes in resourcing strategy or set-up are pushing the agenda for training, which aligns with what we hear anecdotally about many resourcing teams going through both strategic and structural changes to ensure they are set up to find the very best talent in an increasingly competitive market. Commentary in the survey certainly supports this, with respondents identifying workforce or talent scarcity as well as increasing competition as driving forces behind the need for upskilling.



The ever-evolving nature of recruitment also seems to be an influencing factor, with respondents calling out the fact that as recruitment grows in commercial importance, teams are increasingly needing to dial up strategic business partnering skills, prompting a capability need.

Technology, globalisation and budgets are also cited as reasons behind the focus on training in recruitment teams.

Only 21% suggested that hiring managers are expecting or asking for it to happen, however in previous research, recruiters said that 1 of the top 3 activities they spend the most time doing is consulting with and advising managers, which would suggest that whilst hiring managers may not be explicitly demanding it, the need is there.

### Hot topics

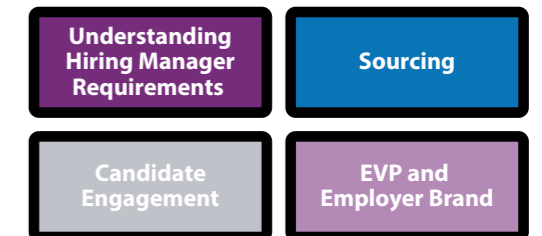
In an effort to first understand how work agendas might determine capability and training requirements this year, we asked respondents to tell us about **the importance of specific resourcing issues** to them or their team currently.

Interestingly, all aspects of the recruitment life cycle are seen as either important or critically important, demonstrating varying focuses within organisations and/or a very challenging resourcing agenda whereby teams are trying to achieve multiple things across the lifecycle.

However, the 4 topics that rank highest in terms of critical importance are understanding hiring manager requirements, Sourcing, Candidate Engagement, and EVP/Employer Brand.

Interestingly, non-technical skills are also ranked quite highly, with soft skills being ranked as critically important by 41% of respondents, and respondents calling out specific soft skills areas such as stakeholder management, confidence, resilience and relationship.

It also seems that skills that have not always been regarded as technical recruitment skills are fast



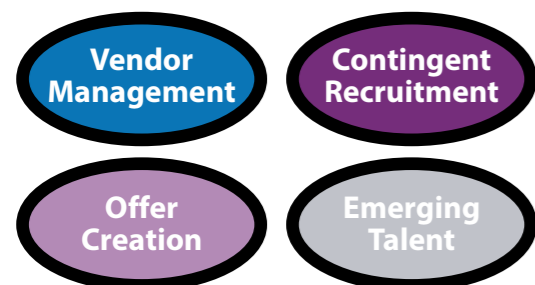
### It's not all about technical recruitment skills



respondents called out specific soft skills areas such as stakeholder management, confidence, resilience and relationship building

becoming critical to the success of recruiters. Data appears several times, signalling a real focus on capability in this area during 2019.

## Lowest ranked in terms of importance



...yet still not unimportant

The lowest ranking (albeit still seen as at least important) are vendor management, contingent recruitment, offer creation and emerging talent.

It is interesting to note that these 4 aspects are also often the ones that are not managed by TA professionals specifically or in isolation- perhaps appearing in, or with support from more specialist teams such as a procurement, service delivery or teams dedicated to contingent or graduate recruitment.

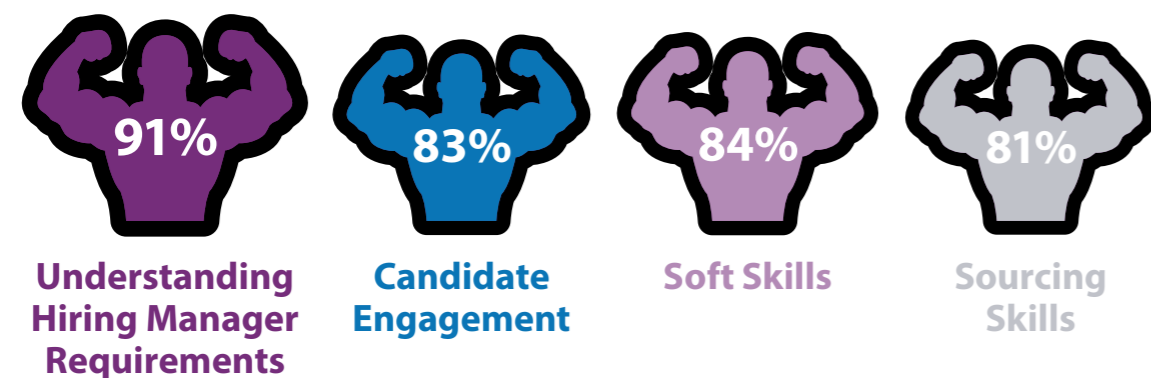
We next asked respondents to **rate their own capability in the various aspects of**

**recruitment and talent acquisition**, to provide a different perspective on the importance of specific topical capability interventions.

Out of the areas that respondents rate themselves as highest in (strong or expert level) it is encouraging to see that 3 of the areas that were called out as being priorities in terms of work agenda and impact (understanding hiring manager requirements, candidate engagement and sourcing ) are also the areas that the individuals surveyed rate as having stronger capabilities in.

91% consider themselves to be either strong or expert level in understanding hiring manager requirements, 83% feel this is the case when it comes to candidate engagement, and 84% feel confident about the strength of their soft skills. 81% rate themselves as having either strong or expert level sourcing skills.

## % that consider themselves to be Strong or Expert Level



With the push on stronger partnering capabilities and the broadening of many recruitment roles into the talent space, it is also positive to see that 71% rate themselves as strong or expert level Strategic Advisors. A key question however, is how consistently people understand and interpret the terms 'strategic advisor' given the relative newness of this shift, and the varying degrees to which this is landing in organisations. Given that working with and providing insights would be considered a key skill for a Strategic Advisor, this question may be validated when we note that only 54% of survey respondents rate themselves as strong or expert level for this specific skill. It is also worth noting however that the 73% of respondents who have a team may rate themselves more highly in these skills, given exposure and opportunity to deliver strategic work within more senior roles, hence this may produce a positively skewed response against strategic advisory capability.

## % that rank themselves Weak or Getting By



Interestingly, despite its perceived importance in this research, as well as in previous FIRM research such as the Annual Membership Survey, only 63% believe they are strong or expert level when it comes to employer brand and EVP. This is an obvious concern, which makes for one area that capability may require stronger focus. It may also suggest the need for stronger links to be made between marketing and recruitment teams who may have historically worked more separately, to ensure stronger capability in these areas.

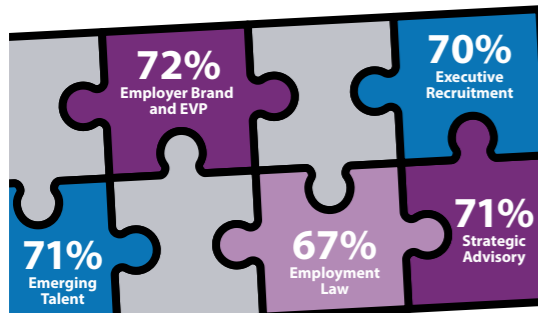
Another development area highlighted by the results is employment law, given 54% rate themselves as either 'weak' or 'getting by'. Given increasing legislation (e.g. GDPR), it is certainly an area that seems to require attention and training.

The 24% of respondents who rate their leadership as lower are most likely made up of the 27% of respondents who do not yet have a team. This in itself may not create too much of an immediate concern, however if we assume that this group may have an ambition to become future resourcing leaders, this could suggest a capability gap that will need to be addressed to ensure there are appropriate successors for current resourcing leaders.

The next question we asked was aimed at the 73% of respondents who manage a team currently.

They were asked to **rate their team's capability in the various aspects of recruitment and talent acquisition**.

## Top 5 development areas for teams according to Resourcing Leaders



Responses suggest that leaders echo the concerns about capability in the areas of Employer Brand and EVP, with 72% highlighting a concern over capability here, and 19% of those stating that their teams are weak in both areas.

67% rated their team's knowledge of Employment Law as no stronger than 'getting by', which supports the self-assessment rating and certainly suggests a need for additional training to ensure compliance and best practice.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, leaders also rate their team's capability lower in the areas that recruiters

do not necessarily own, or those that they have less exposure to. This includes Executive Recruitment, Contingent Recruitment, Vendor Management and Emerging Talent.

Teams were rated as either weak or getting by, by 70% of resourcing leaders against Executive Recruitment, by 62% against contingent recruitment, by 68% against vendor management and by 71% against Emerging Talent.

This may not prove a concern currently, but given the trend towards total talent management, it does present a potential challenge for the future, should recruiter roles become more holistic.

A more immediate concern relates to the rating from leaders around Strategic Advisory and Insight skills. Only 29% feel their teams are strong or expert level when it comes to acting as Strategic Advisors and 62% rate their teams as only weak or getting by in relation to using and providing insights. This is sure to be an area of focus when we consider that these are fast becoming business-as-usual expectations within recruiter roles.

When it comes to leadership skills, 62% of current leaders see this as a developmental gap amongst their teams. This is almost certainly driven by a lack of experience and/or exposure but does present a real challenge and concern



### Leadership Skills



**62%** of current leaders see Leadership as a developmental gap amongst their teams

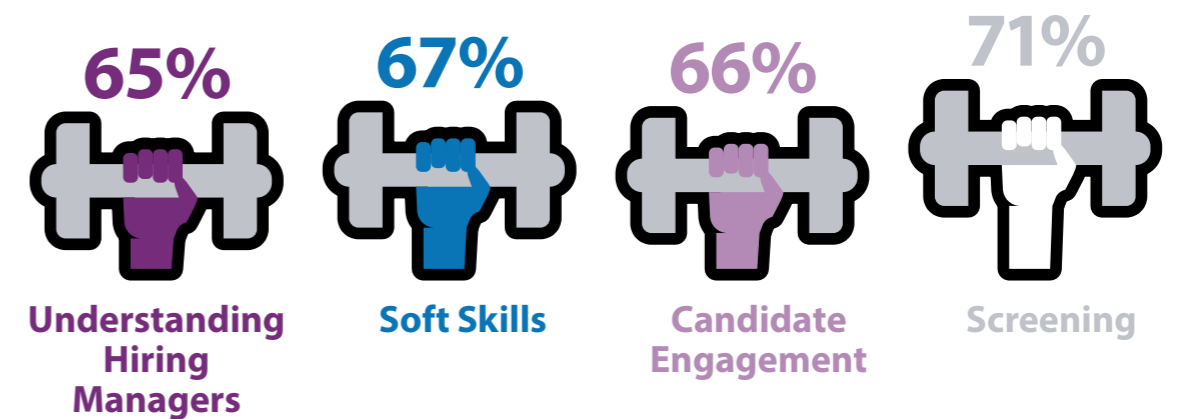
when considering the next generation of recruitment leaders. It seems fair to suggest that leadership skills training will need to be invested in, if we are to prepare aspiring leaders appropriately, and arm them with the skills they need.

The good news is that leaders do rate their teams as more capable in the areas of understanding hiring manager requirements, candidate engagement and screening, as well as soft skills as a broader skill set.

This is encouraging given that understanding hiring managers and candidate engagement were amongst the top 4 priorities, and soft skills were called out as critically important by 42% of respondents.

65% of resourcing leaders rate their teams as strong or expert in understanding hiring managers, 67% consider them to be at this level against soft skills, 66% consider this to be the case against candidate engagement, and 71% have a high confidence in the capability of their teams when it comes to screening.

### % of resourcing leaders who rate their teams as Strong or Expert Level



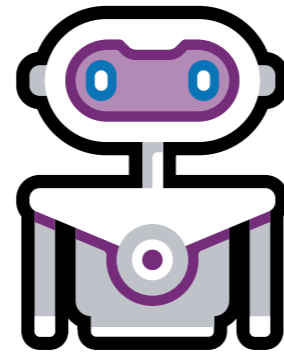
## Additional Skills

Our final question for respondents related to **additional skills that they feel are relevant in 2019.**

Our respondents, perhaps not surprisingly, cited Technology skills as becoming of greater importance in 2019, even though they currently rate their own and their team's skills relatively highly in this area.

Respondents refer to the speed of change in organisations, and how the candidate market is becoming more challenging, dialing up the need for stronger sourcing. They also highlight a need to develop existing and aspiring leaders to ensure there is the ability to manage change.

## Technology Skills



**are becoming of greater importance in 2019**



## About us

We are a thriving community of Talent Acquisition professionals that provides both tactical and strategic insight and support to our members.

We are:

- Run by in-house recruiters, for in-house recruiters
- A membership organisation supporting in-house recruiters since 2007
- A source of practical, tangible support for recruiters nationwide
- A community that reflects the full spectrum of in-house recruiters



[www.thefirm-network.com](http://www.thefirm-network.com)  
[info@thefirm-network.com](mailto:info@thefirm-network.com)



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