



ManpowerGroup™  
Solutions  
Recruitment Process Outsourcing

# When Engaging the Right Talent, One Size Does Not Fit All

Candidate Preferences in  
Job Search and Interview Practices

This is the first in a five-part series  
from ManpowerGroup Solutions analysing the  
results of its candidate preferences survey.









Today, job search activity is heavily concentrated in the virtual environment. The proliferation of job boards, both general and niche, speaks to their nearly ubiquitous use by candidates. The question for human resource departments is not whether or not to promote positions virtually. Rather, it's which online platforms will best align to desired candidate pools, and how to round out the online experience of those candidates and enhance attraction.

To explore candidate online engagement preferences, ManpowerGroup Solutions Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), the world's largest RPO provider, surveyed more than 200 job seekers about their use of and preferences for social media platforms and online job resources while passively or actively searching for jobs. In addition, respondents were asked about their online interviewing experiences and preferences. The picture that emerges is one of connection and customisation. One size does not fit all when it comes to engaging prospective employees.

## MORE ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents represented a cross section of age, income, employment status, career level and industry in which they were employed. Among the respondents, there was a clear correlation that as income and/or career level increases/rises, the regular use of multiple social media platforms also increases/rises.

### Income Level

- Income levels correlated with job search activity.
- Respondents who earned less than \$70,000/year were **1.6 times** more likely to seek out new jobs than those earning more than \$70,000
- Respondents who earned less than \$150,000/year were **2.5 times** more likely to seek out new jobs than those who earned more than \$150,000

### Employment Status:

- **58%** full-time employees
- **12%** part-time employees
- **7%** independent contractors
- **16%** unemployed

### Job Search Status:

- Job search activity varied with age, income level and experience.
- **32%** considered themselves active job seekers
- **64%** cited their status as a passive job seeker, applying to two or fewer jobs in the last six months

### Career Level

- **6%** entry-level
- **37%** experienced non-managers
- **26%** managers
- **6%** senior level managers or directors
- **5%** senior executives

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES/ ORGANISATIONS

Respondents were asked which sources they typically used to gather information about employers or positions while researching job opportunities online. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents (86 percent) cited employer websites as a primary

*The content and functionality of your website and career site matter – nearly 9 out of 10 candidates use them as a primary source of information about your firm. They represent the best opportunity to set the tone for the candidate experience.*

search resource (Figure 1). Search engine results and peers came in second and third respectively at 52 percent and 45 percent. Among online job search sites, Indeed, CareerBuilder and Monster

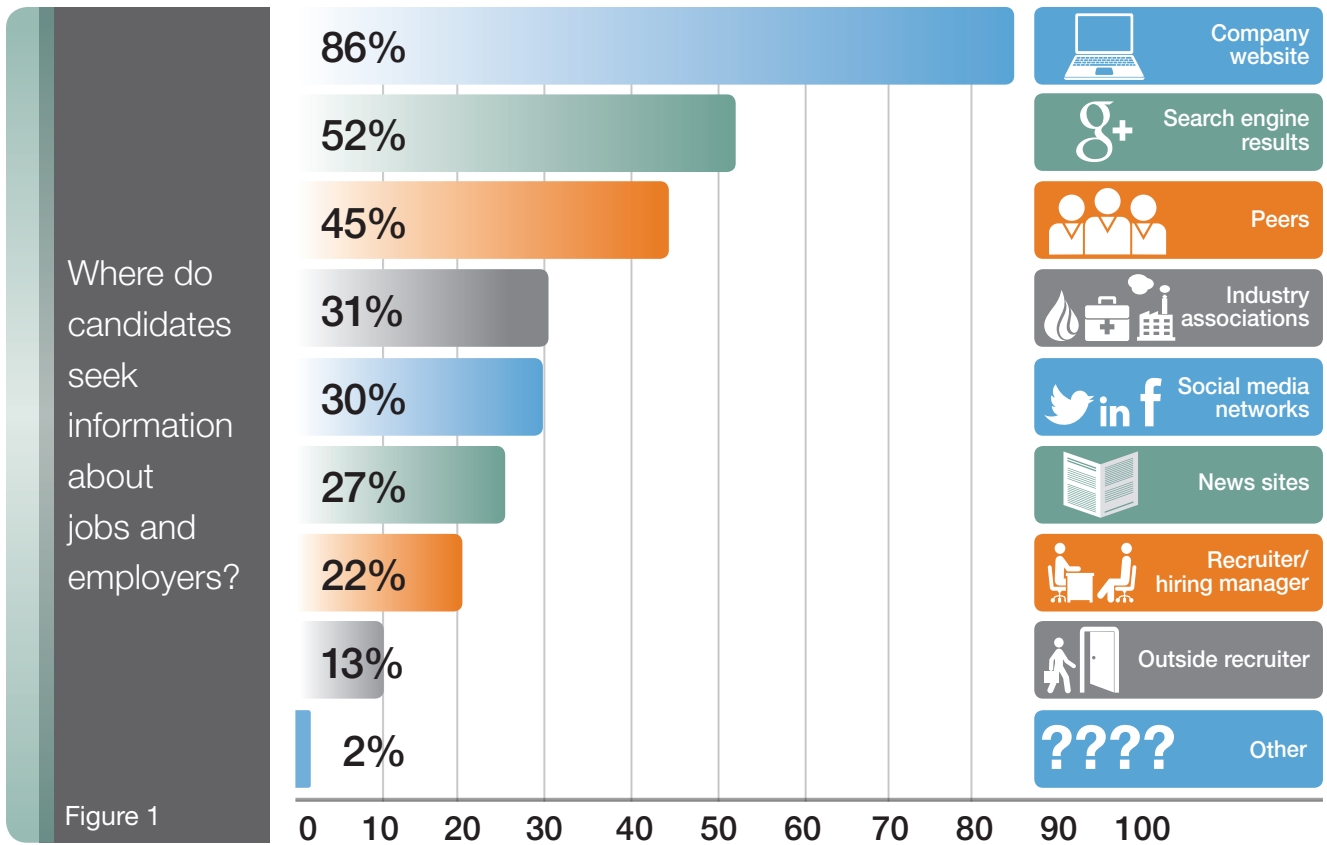


Figure 1

were the top three for respondents' use.

Because serious candidates are investigating the websites of the employers they are interested in, organisations must approach website development strategically, review their current content from a candidate's perspective and take a critical look at job descriptions. In fact, when respondents were asked what feedback or information would be valuable to improve/enhance their job search, the top response (36 percent) was a need for clearer, more detailed information about the organisation, the job opportunity and related compensation. Candidates want to know more about an organisation and other available roles before deciding to apply.

While researching job opportunities, **nearly a third of all respondents (30 percent) use social media networking to gather more information about the open position or organisation** (Figure 2).

This speaks to the weight candidates place on professional introductions and to the importance

## Online Job Search Site Preferences

- **CareerBuilder** – preferred by younger candidates
- **Glassdoor** – preferred by younger candidates and candidates that would be motivated to apply to a job opportunity because of the industry in which the opportunity is based
- **SimplyHired** – preferred by younger candidates and candidates that are motivated to apply to a job opportunity because of the industry in which the opportunity is based
- **Local Job Networks/Boards** – preferred by older candidates
- **Jobs.com** – preferred by lower income workers
- **TheLadders** – preferred by candidates with higher household income and those that are motivated to apply to a job opportunity because of the industry in which the opportunity is based

of a strong and reputable employer brand. Three websites stood out as most popular for this purpose: Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn.

**Facebook.** More than 70 percent of social media users have

Facebook accounts – and use them to learn about organisations and available jobs. While Generation Y and Millennials have used Facebook profiles more for social purposes and are now using other social platforms more frequently, older generations are using Facebook to review comments about companies and discover new job openings. Nonetheless, if people are more advanced in their career levels, have been working at a company for more than 5 years, or are earning high incomes, they likely won't be seeking job information on Facebook.

**Google+.** Nearly half of social media users (43 percent) have acquired information about jobs and employers through their Google+ accounts. A majority of these respondents use Twitter as well. Those who use Google+ as their job lead resource were not motivated by the compensation levels of the positions for which they applied.

*One size does not fit all when it comes to engaging prospective employees.*

**LinkedIn.** The percentage of social media users who use LinkedIn to discover job openings or acquire information about employers of interest is virtually identical to Google+ users (43 percent). Like Google+, LinkedIn users were not overly motivated by jobs' income levels either. At the same time, they often had Twitter

accounts as well, which they used for job seeking purposes. With regards to age and income level, professionals who were more advanced in their careers, and consequently older and earning more, often preferred LinkedIn over other social media platforms. One important callout in the findings related to active job seekers: Usage of LinkedIn and Instagram together is predictive of a person being more likely to actively search for a job.

**Instagram emerges.** As another popular website for survey respondents, Instagram is used by nearly 15 percent of the participants who research organisations and conduct job searches through social media networks. Of note, respondents who are most comfortable with video technology tend to use Instagram more often than those who aren't. When candidates are actively applying to jobs, they also use LinkedIn and Instagram together. To attract active job seekers, employers should consider asking their LinkedIn followers to also follow their

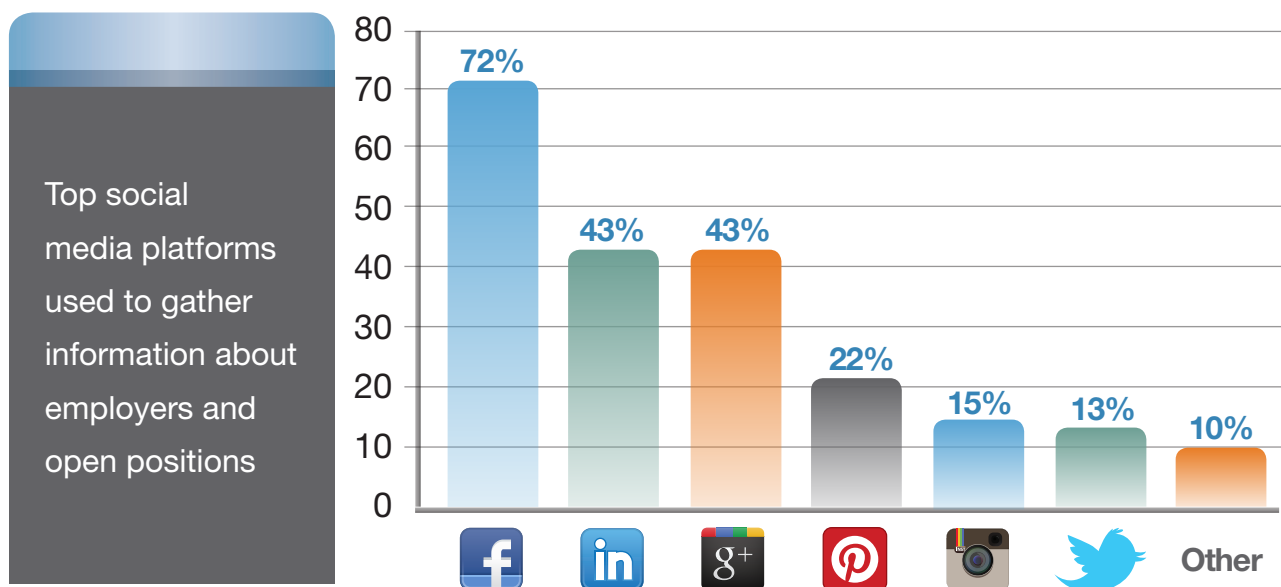


Figure 2

Instagram profiles and vice versa as a means of increasing their awareness of employers' brands and available job opportunities.

## TRADITION STILL TRUMPS TECHNOLOGY IN INTERVIEW PROCESS

The use of online tools has extended beyond job searches. Virtual job interviews have become commonplace in many industries. While they are often a more timely and cost-effective option for employers than in-person interviews, virtual interviews may sometimes prevent candidates from being at ease or presenting their talents in the best possible way.

*“By maximizing their presence on and engagement with carefully selected social media platforms, employers can attract and engage the right candidates faster and more efficiently.”*

*– James McCoy, vice president ManpowerGroup Solutions and NA RPO practice lead*

In fact, respondents were asked which type of interview format they most preferred — telephone, video, live, etc. On average, respondents preferred the more traditional formats of in-person or telephone interviews to video conferencing (Figures 3 and 4). The format most preferred was an in-person interview with the hiring manager, which collectively received a 4.4/5.0 with 5.0 being “completely comfortable.” In fact, 72% of respondents selected this option as their preferred format over all others. This finding held across all ages. Respondents with lower career levels or longer average job tenures were more likely to be most comfortable with this format as well.

### Interview via video conference technology and personal video introductions.

Video conference technology has become a hot topic in HR departments. It can bring cost savings, but candidate preference is very clear on this. While there is a general comfort level with the technology (rated at 3.3/5.0 with 5.0 being “completely comfortable”), respondents of all ages overwhelmingly stated their preference for in-person and telephone interviews.



Respondents with more experience were found to have a greater comfort level with the video conferencing technology.

In addition, there was a positive correlation between income levels and preferences for video interviews, as higher paid respondents were more comfortable with applications (like Skype) than lower income participants. The drive for higher compensation also impacted respondents' willingness to experiment with more unique interview types, such as personal video introductions and video interviews, especially if respondents' participation in these formats improved their likelihood of acquiring higher paid positions.

### Candidates want connection during the interview process



Figure 4

## Talent Insight

“Even as technology – and the awareness of new tools – continues to advance at a rapid pace, the tried, but true methods of in-person and phone interviews remain the clear preference for job seekers across generations,” says James F. McCoy, vice president ManpowerGroup Solutions and NA RPO practice lead. “Organisations should evaluate their talent acquisition strategy and customise job seekers’ experiences based on their preferences.”

### Initial phone screening interview with recruiter.

Respondents appeared to be comfortable with initial phone interviews as well, as the format averaged a 4 on the comfortability scale (1-5). Roughly 16% of respondents preferred this format to any other. Temporary employees, as well as respondents with lower career levels, were the most comfortable with this format.

*High-touch and high-tech in recruiting go hand-in-hand. Technology is an important recruiting tool but don't overlook the value of personality and connection – they matter just as much, if not more.*

### Telephone conference interview.

If a prospective employee is unable to participate in an in-person interview due to its distant location or other circumstances, he or she is comfortable having a telephone conference as an alternative. Averaging almost 4 on the comfortability scale, telephone conference interview format was most preferred by respondents working on a part-time, contract or temporary basis. Interestingly, younger, lower career level respondents were not very comfortable with telephone conferences.

# WHETHER HIGH-TECH OR HIGH-TOUCH: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CANDIDATE

Employers can ensure a more successful acquisition of top talent by first ensuring their HR teams and HR partners fully understand the influence technological applications and social media networks can have on the entire job search process – from initial engagement to final interviews. These tools can serve to reinforce the organisation's brand and reach active and passive candidates more quickly, but applications and social media are not a substitute for human interaction. Ultimately, it will be the hiring managers and recruiters who will make connections with candidates and share a compelling value proposition that can result in the right hiring decision.

## Go back to the basics.


While candidates are becoming more and more exposed to new technologies during their job searches and hiring processes, they clearly prefer the straight forward, time-tested practices of phone screening/interviews and in-person interviews over personalised video CVs and video interviews. Employers should first understand the profiles of talent they want to target and consider a range of approaches when interacting with candidates. They must use the right technology tools in the right scenarios. Video technologies are emerging, and employers should focus on enhancing the video experience overall to improve usage of these cost-effective tools. One size or one methodology does not fit all candidates. The nature of employer-candidate interactions should be guided by the type of talent employers wish to attract and engage.

## Personality is key.

At the same time, organisations should consider the personalities of hiring managers and recruiters, especially if in-person interviews are conducted. If recruiters are not a proper fit, top talent will immediately take note of the mismatch. The result may be detrimental as candidates who do not find a rapport with interviewers may look elsewhere and possibly accept opportunities with other employers instead, including competitors.

## Enhance website and social media branding to target ideal candidates.

Organisations must incorporate candidates' needs into their talent acquisition strategy through targeted and customised branding techniques, particularly around generational preferences for technology and social media engagement. Once employers identify the type(s) of employee they are most interested in hiring, they must determine how to enhance the online interactions and which social media platform(s) that talent prefers most. An employer's website – particularly its career site – is the #1 resource passive and active candidates visit and use in their job search.



*Evaluate your talent acquisition strategy and customise job seekers' experiences based on the talent you intend to hire.*

Employers can attract the right talent faster and more efficiently through proper usage of SEO techniques and by developing more robust career sites on their websites. The most effective career sites are compatible with most operating systems and are device-agnostic, which means they can work on and be easily viewed on different types of devices, including notebooks, tablet PCs and smartphones. To maximise their talent attraction quotient and ensure greater and quicker engagement with the right talent, employers should include relevant, user-friendly, compelling




and easily digestible content about their brand, culture, available jobs, the hiring process, as well as professional growth and development paths. In addition, employers should enhance and customise their social media presence to align platforms they use and topics they cover with what matters to specific talent pools they want to attract.

### **Create the experience candidates want.**

More than 35 percent of prospective employees want organisations to provide more information about jobs and more frequent interactions during the hiring process, while another 25 percent prefer to receive more company information.

Understanding talent preferences and profiles is the first step in building a candidate-centered experience. Employers should harness the



*Candidates are becoming more sophisticated in the way they look for positions, but nothing can serve as substitutes for a compelling value proposition, personal interaction and online resources that reinforce an employer's brand.*

institutional knowledge within their organisations to focus their talent acquisition strategy on a more efficient and effective targeting of top talent. Leverage all of the available data sources, including insights from non-HR functions, such as marketing and IT, to get more precise data analysis for the most well-rounded and complete view of candidates, and the best ways to attract the right talent.

In addition, consider external industry resources that can provide a different and fresh perspective. Benchmark your candidate experience with that of industry leaders – The Talent Board's Candidate Experience Awards can be one valid measure of success. There can be no cutting corners when it comes to providing a positive candidate-centered experience.

# MANPOWERGROUP SOLUTIONS RPO – UNCOMPLICATING A COMPLEX TALENT SOURCING WORLD.

As experts at cracking the talent sourcing code, ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO's 2,500 professionals use the workforce solutions industry's latest tools and techniques to identify top-tier candidates for their clients. With one sole purpose in mind – to enable the hiring of the best candidates as efficiently as possible, while also providing business intelligence and data – ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO approach delivers better outcomes.

**Customised solutions.** As a passionate expert in talent acquisition, ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO delivers customised solutions to clients around the world every day.

**Flexibility.** To support its clients in 80 countries and territories around the world, ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO develops and implements flexible programs tailored for companies on all continents – customised to local cultures, market demands, sourcing channels, interview practices and regulatory environments, so their needs are fully met.

**Actionable insights.** By removing complexity, ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO delivers actionable insights to each of its clients on a short and long-term basis, including market data, legislative and regulatory updates, recruiting program and satisfaction analysis. Recognising the need to be agile in a constantly evolving Human Age, ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO also offers the following three social media capabilities to each of its customers.

- **Training.** ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO develops unique, customised training programs for every client, tailored specifically with a company's branding goals in mind, from initial preparation to final deliverables.
- **Project consulting.** Developed for only a short, prearranged amount of time, ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO's consulting projects and services tend to only occur once.
- **Ongoing consulting.** ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO can also provide clients social media services on an ongoing basis, only to be used when necessary, or a permanent level of support that occurs on a monthly basis.

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