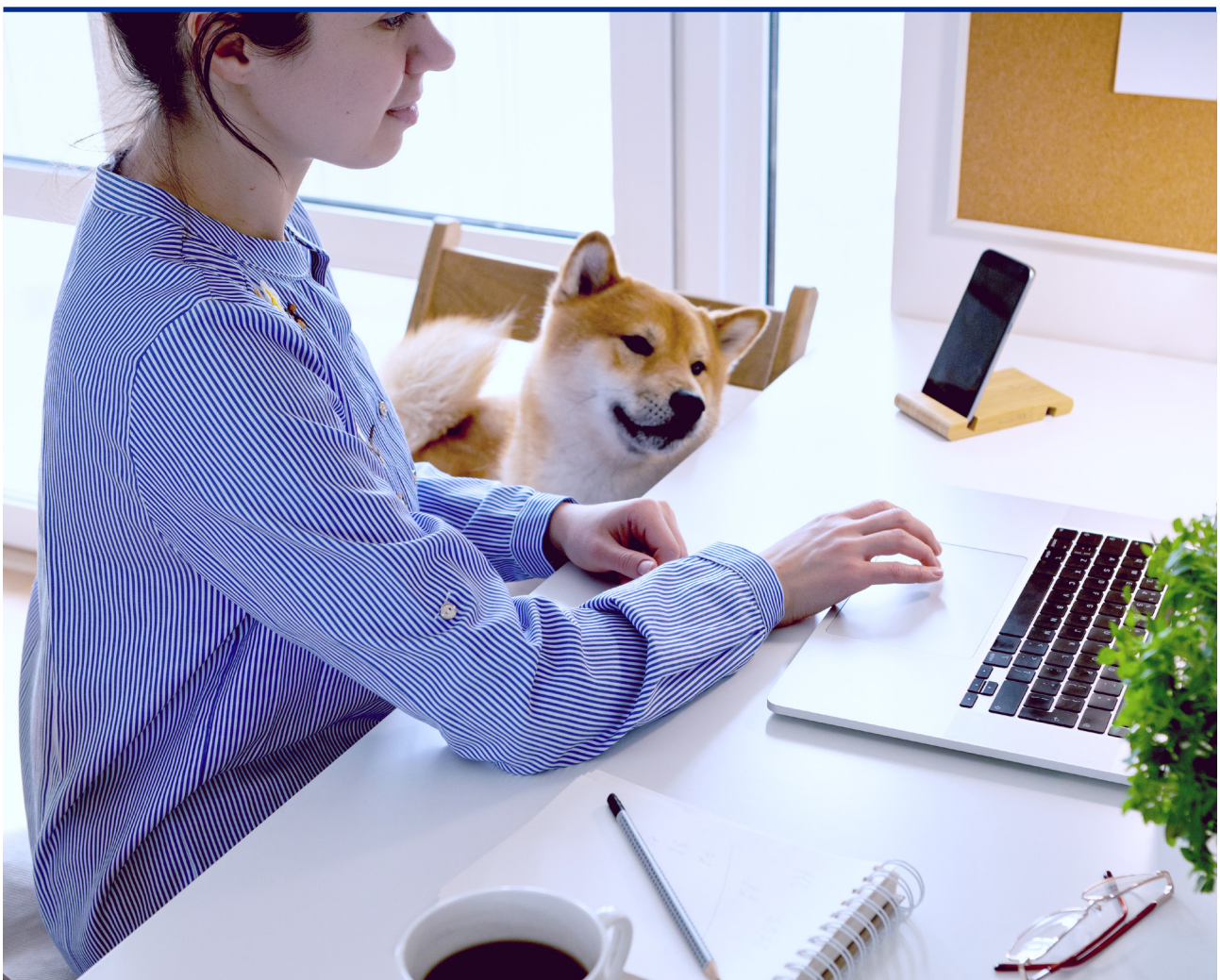


What competencies should recruiters look for when growing their team?

How the recruitment industry can respond to COVID-19 and grow.



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PURPOSE

With the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the recruitment industry still uncertain, Talegent and RCSA are working together to analyse the key competencies that recruiters need to be successful. With recruiters heavily affected, we are evaluating what competencies are necessary for a recruiter to succeed and to help guide leaders on how best to coach development areas.

Alongside understanding the competencies to succeed, we are working to understand where the industry sits following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on recruitment and how these competencies can be applied to source the best talent pool.

By looking into the changes in how we recruit, with moves to implement fully digital processes, and the changes in the types of jobs we are recruiting for, we have evaluated how recruiters can grow as a result of the pandemic.

Recruiters and the recruitment industry

Recruitment is essential for all organisations, whether it is done to grow, innovate or simply fill gaps. Recruitment is the process of attracting, engaging, and hiring employees for a specific position or role.

It includes the full hiring process, including identifying the need to find new employees, job posting, assessing and selecting candidates, to finally onboarding the new hire. Many organisations view recruiting as a competitive advantage that is the foundation of innovation,

productivity, reputation and commercial results – the best way to stay ahead in recruiting is to use multiple techniques to attract, discover and engage talent. (see Figure 1)

Recruiters are a key piece of the recruitment puzzle. Without skilled recruiters any hiring process will fall short, whether it is due to a lack of candidates found, the quality of candidate, or the candidate experience.



Figure 1. Candidate Journey

Role of recruiters

When discussing recruiters, there are multiple roles that they can fall into. The primary types of recruiters we will be discussing are agency and in-house recruiters.

Agency recruiter

Works in a recruitment agency to source candidates for multiple clients.

It is important to note that depending on the agency, they can specialise in hiring for specific roles or a wide range of roles. For example, they may solely recruit for sales roles, C-suite executives, or place temps in multiple industries.

Agency recruiters may have exclusive contracts to do the recruiting for an organisation or may work on an as-needed basis alongside other recruiters competing for the placement. They can also work on the behalf of candidates, searching for jobs suited to them, or on the behalf of companies, searching for candidates suited to their roles.

In-house recruiter

Cover the internal hiring needs of their organisation, sourcing candidates for multiple roles within the company. They will often function alongside HR, or for smaller organisations in HR as well.

In-house recruiters will usually specialise in the industry that their organisation operates in, for example, security clearance roles for a security company.

It is important to note that depending on the size of the organisation in-house recruiters may hold a more general HR role and act as a recruiter as needed, or there could be a full recruiting team that works alongside HR and managers to source new employees as needed.

Key Similarities

One key similarity of agency and in-house recruiters is that they are excellent relationship builders. Recruiters need to develop good relationships with both the candidates and the rest of the organisation, whether they are agency-based or in-house. Good recruiters build these relationships by developing strong interpersonal skills, sending personalised messages and always following up with people.

Successful recruiters are exceptional talent finders and use multiple sources to attract the best applicants. Dependant on industry and role level, recruiters may have different places to find the best applicants, such as industry job boards. Therefore, recruiters need to know their candidates well to source them efficiently. Both agency and in-house recruiters engage in proactive sourcing, aiming to build talent pipelines and fill vacancies quickly.

Core Differences

While at first glance it can seem that agency and in-house recruiters have the same or highly similar roles, there are significant differences between them. When looking at the differences between agency and in-house recruiters the main thing to focus on is the need they are meeting for an organisation.

An agency recruiter is well suited for when an organisation needs to fill a position quickly and doesn't have the time to source, screen and interview multiple candidates. They may also suit an organisation that doesn't need a full-time in-house recruiter or cannot budget for one.

An in-house recruiter will suit an organisation that has long-term hiring plans and needs an internal recruiter to lead the effort. Key for in-house recruiters is an organisation that has a definite need and budget.

Key performance indicators

While recruiters tend to be focused on meeting their KPIs, these are typically based on candidate numbers and placements. However, there are several other metrics and ratios that they should also keep a close eye on.

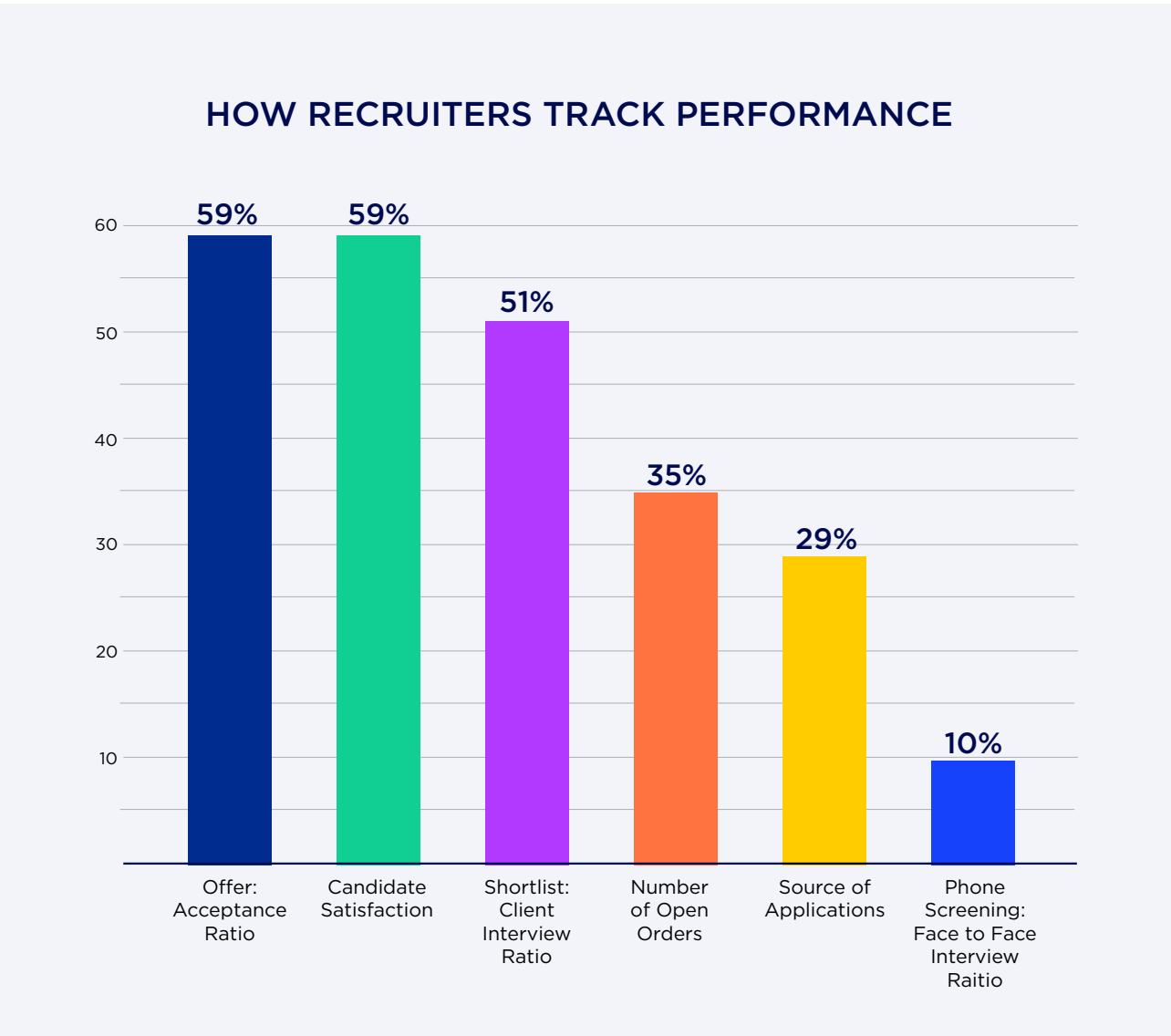


Figure 2. How recruiters track performance; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Source of Applications

Tracking the source of applications enables recruiters to more efficiently advertise roles.

Where are your best candidates coming from? Is there one particular source? Perhaps an online job board? Are they coming straight to your website? Maybe you're finding them on LinkedIn? Or are they being referred to you by other satisfied candidates that you've placed previously?

If a role was posted on two job boards but only one of them had any applicants, the next time a role is being recruited in that industry and at that level, it is likely that a recruiter would only post to the successful job board.

Phone Screening : Face-To-Face Interview Ratio

Monitoring the ratio between phone or video screening and face-to-face videos helps a recruiter evaluate the time they are spending on virtually screening candidates.

It would be very rare to invite all phone or video screened candidates in for an interview, so recruiters must make the most of the screening process and be aware of how much time they spend on virtual screening vs face-to-face interviews.

Shortlist : Client Interview Ratio

This is a good ratio to monitor as it helps recruiters understand the quality of their candidates from their client's perspective. If clients are consistently rejecting three-quarters of shortlisted candidates for interviews, it can be the case that the recruiter is not qualifying candidates in the best way for their clients.

Offer : Acceptance Ratio

This is an important metric to track as it helps recruiters track their qualification of candidates. If through the application and assessment process the candidate has not been fully qualified, recruiters run the risk of their candidates not accepting an offer, which puts them back in the position of requalifying their other candidates.

Candidate Satisfaction

Recruiters should always touch base with candidates they have placed in roles to make sure that it was a well-made placement. However, it is key to remember that a satisfied candidate will tell one friend about their experience, while a dissatisfied candidate will tell 10, as well as what thoughts and opinions they share on social media.

Measuring candidate satisfaction is essential and it is recommended that recruiters survey each candidate that has had exposure to them each quarter.

The Talegent and RCSA survey found that recruiters look to a combination of metrics to help them stay on top of their game with **their key metrics being candidate satisfaction and the ratio of candidates who accept roles offered to them.** These results align with the best practice guidelines set out above.

Key recruiter competencies

Talegent and the RCSA surveyed recruiters to find out what competencies were most useful to them, what they would develop in their team, and what they value when growing their team.

WHAT HELPED YOU THRIVE THIS YEAR

Recruiters drew on their strong communication ability to get them through this year with 80% of respondents reporting this helped them be better recruiters. The top five supportive competencies for recruiters are rounded out by a combination of interpersonal skills, customer focus, and resilience.

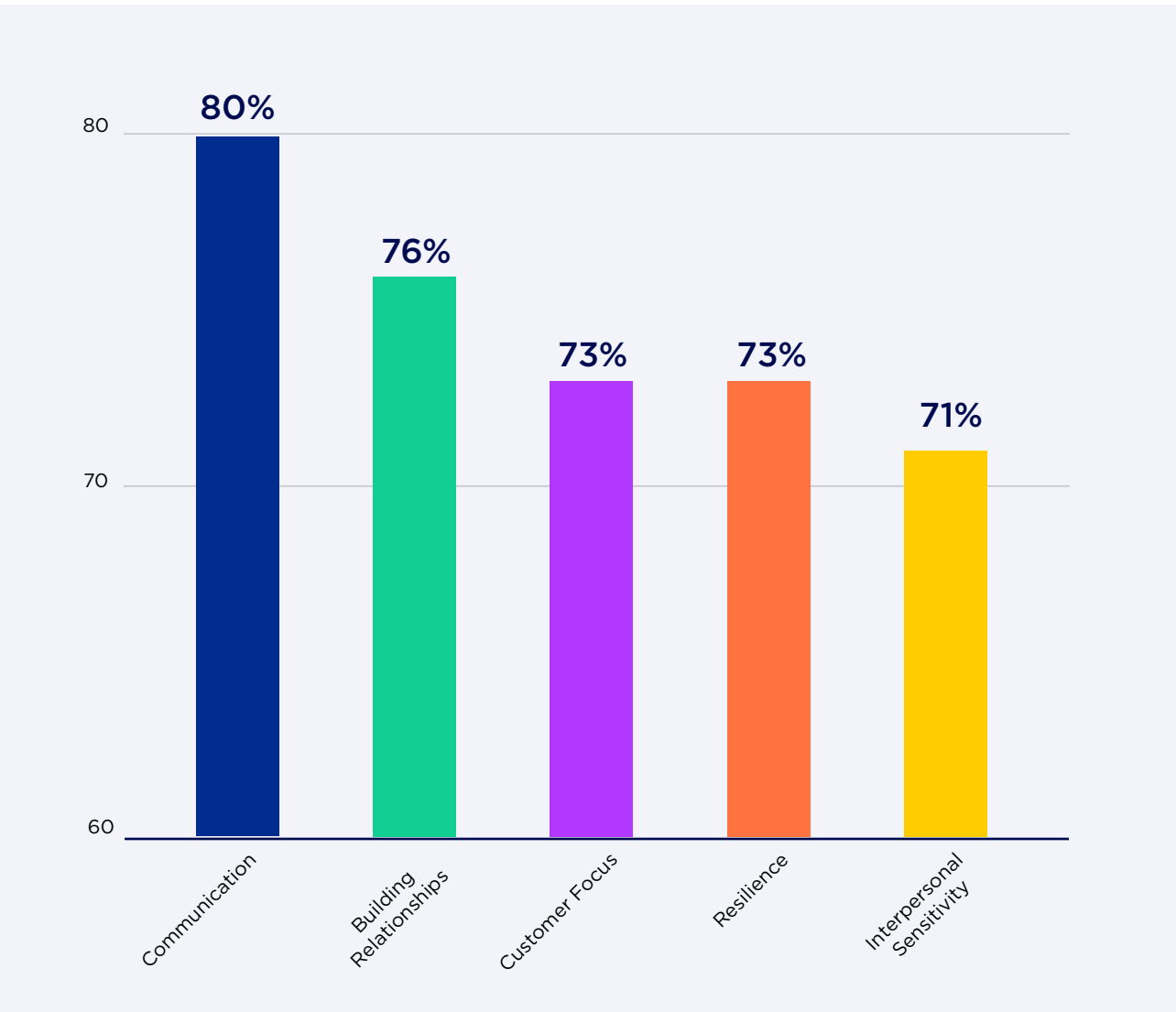


Figure 3. What helped recruiters thrive this year; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

How to develop these
Communication

Know your audience and vary your approach to suit. If you are speaking to colleagues from a different area of the business than yourself it might pay to learn their 'language'. This not only means using the right words and avoiding jargon but also using the right tone and line of reasoning. Are they more formal or informal? Would numbers help your argument with this group? Try to anticipate their questions and reasons for pushing back on what you have to say.

Even if you tend to work alone remember that organisations depend on the flow of information. No matter how insignificant you think a finding is, ensure that your boss, team members, and peers are aware of it too. Not communicating clearly could cause problems down the track.

Building Relationships

It is important to gain a wider view of yourself. Seek feedback not just on what you have achieved but how you worked with others in achieving your goals. What did you do well? What could you improve on?

Be good at influencing. Don't just be agreeable and cooperative with team members, learn to negotiate, guide thinking, and influence others too. Improve your knowledge on discussion points before you attend a meeting - be armed with some opinions and practise sharing them with the team.

Customer Focus

Anticipate customer needs. Be interested in your customer's business and what they need. Start to consult with them about products and services, or offer something they weren't expecting, that you feel fit their needs. Try to pre-empt their requirements. Don't wait until they are on the phone asking for or chasing up something, try to have prepared and pre-empted that call yourself.

Put your customers first. If your role is to provide timely and efficient customer service then ensure that your work systems and processes are designed around your customers, not you. Put yourself in their shoes. Give them an experience, not just a product or service.

Resilience

When faced with setbacks and barriers to success, you may benefit from some coaching and development to help you to maintain a positive outlook and to persevere despite the adversity.

Don't let your initial reaction to a changing or ambiguous situation guide your behaviour. Give yourself a moment to take in the situation and calm your emotional response.

Don't try to respond to or solve the issue until you have taken the time to process it carefully with a level head. Focus on your strengths. Take time to think about a challenge you have overcome in the past. Which of your strengths did you leverage in this previous situation? What did you learn from that situation that you can apply to the present setback or obstacle? You may like to involve a trusted peer or manager in this reflective process.

Interpersonal Sensitivity

Be a good listener. Talk less. Ask more questions. Hear people out. Don't cut people off or try to finish what they are saying. Once you have listened, paraphrase. Have you understood their key points? If you need to, especially in high stake situations, enlist the help and support of someone you know to be more interpersonally savvy than yourself. Ask them how they would approach the situation and practice with them.

Embrace differences. Don't see differences as a barrier but an opportunity to learn and leverage different perspectives.

Key recruiter competencies

WHAT IS YOUR TEAM MISSING?

Overall, recruiters were satisfied with the capabilities of their current team with the majority of recruiters (55%) suggesting their team only lacked one to two competencies. A third of recruiters reported that their team currently lacked sales tenacity. Roughly a quarter of recruiters reported their team lacked strategic vision, commercial acumen, or ingenuity. Rounding out the top five list of missing competencies was the ability of their team to see their strengths and development opportunities.

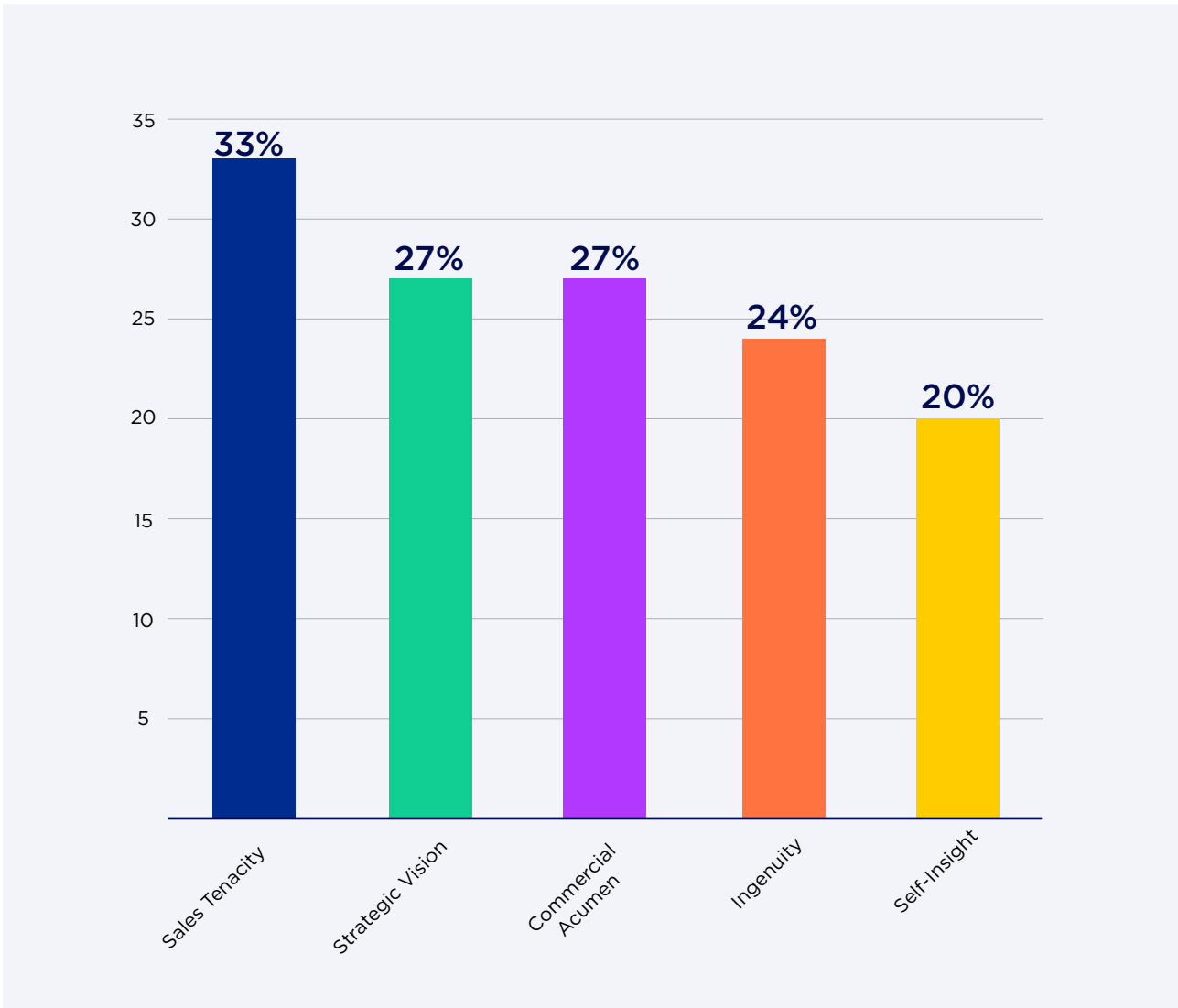


Figure 4. What recruiter teams are missing; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

How to develop these

Sales tenacity

Understand and pre-empt potential opposition. There will always be someone or a group that opposes your idea or has reservations about your product or service. Remain objective and be savvy. Put yourself in their shoes, with their objectives and their constraints. Imagine why you might react as they do. Ask yourself what they may need to know or hear to change their views.

Ask more questions. Make a few resolutions or statements. Ask others for clarification of what they mean, probe for “Why?”. Uncover their motivations, constraints, and objectives, then address these in your pitch.

Strategic Vision

If your role has a strategic function, then delegation will be integral to your success. Free yourself of as many transactional tasks as you can so that you have time for strategic planning.

Even if you do not have a designated strategic function in your role, it will be important to look beyond immediate priorities and daily tasks, toward the bigger picture. If you don't know them already, take the time to understand your team's and the company's long-term strategic objectives. How does your role contribute to these objectives? You might like to involve your manager in this process. Write down three things you can do regularly to help move your team and the company toward strategic success.

Commercial Acumen

Deepen your understanding of the business. Study the annual report. Consult with an expert and ask them what they look for in these reports and why. Relate this to the organisation's strategic plan and start using this information to inform your decision making. What within this do you or your team contribute to, and what would you like to positively impact in the next report?

Read more widely. You will find numerous online journals, articles and business review sites, as well as podcasts and blogs relevant to your industry. Take five to 10 minutes each day to read something outside your usual comfort zone.

Ingenuity

Focus on fostering others' creativity. You don't have to be the 'ideas person' yourself, but you should try to be open to innovative ideas raised by your colleagues. Show interest and enthusiasm when these ideas are raised. Take time to understand the potential of these ideas and how they might improve upon tried and true favourites. You don't have to adopt every new, creative idea, especially if they are a reinvention of the wheel, but there is merit in allowing the idea to be explored and fleshed out.

If you do need to be innovative yourself don't start from scratch. Instead, start with a process that is long-standing or out-of-date and improve upon it. Look at the drivers that existed when it was implemented. Look at why it was once successful. Consider what has changed - the business, your clients, the candidate market? Is this process still as effective? What could you do to improve it?

Ask more questions. When faced with a problem, ask ten questions about it to help you understand it better first.

Self-Insight

Stay humble. Know your strengths, but don't advertise them at every opportunity. People may interpret this as arrogance. Equally, overemphasising your areas for development could be detrimental. Don't ignore them, but don't use them as an excuse either. Effective performers acknowledge and then find ways to compensate for what they are not as good at.

Work on your blind spots. Do you have areas in which you rate yourself more highly than others rate you? Do a mini 360-degree survey on yourself. Elicit feedback on an area you feel you are good at but may not always see results in. Get a better understanding of your behaviour - in what ways do others think you are less effective? Work on this before you try to use this skill again.

Impacts of COVID-19 on the Recruitment Industry

Changes in how we recruit

This year saw dramatic changes in the nature of recruitment, with the vast majority of recruiters reporting that they had less face-to-face interactions as they turned to technology to connect with others. There was also a shift towards working remotely and working more flexible hours in response to the changing nature of work. (see Figure 5)

A recent study on placements pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic found that there was a decrease in new jobs available in New Zealand and Australia at the peak of lockdowns in April 2020 (JobAdder, 2020).

Due to the unprecedented impacts of the pandemic, many organisations and employers had no choice but to freeze new recruitment drives to continue employing their existing staff. During the dip, there was a decrease in both permanent and temporary hires, but temporary roles were quicker to pick up in Australia and New Zealand.

The study found that there was almost a 100% increase in applicants for roles in April 2020 compared to the applicant levels in October 2020. This may be due to a sudden lack of jobs from initial organisational responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

HOW RECRUITMENT CHANGED THIS YEAR

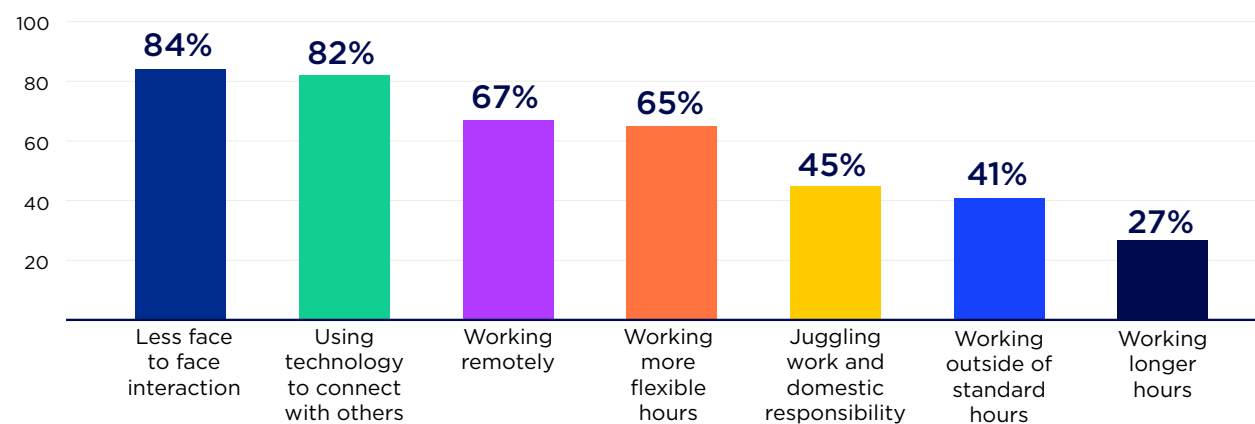


Figure 5. How recruitment changed this year; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Changes in what we are recruiting for

Top Industries

The highest demand for recruitment over the last three months has come from the professional, scientific, and technical services industry with almost half of recruiters surveyed seeing demand in this industry. There was also a demand from a range of other industries with the top five being administrative and support services, manufacturing, construction, and financial and insurance services. (see Figure 6)

INDUSTRIES RECRUITED FOR IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS

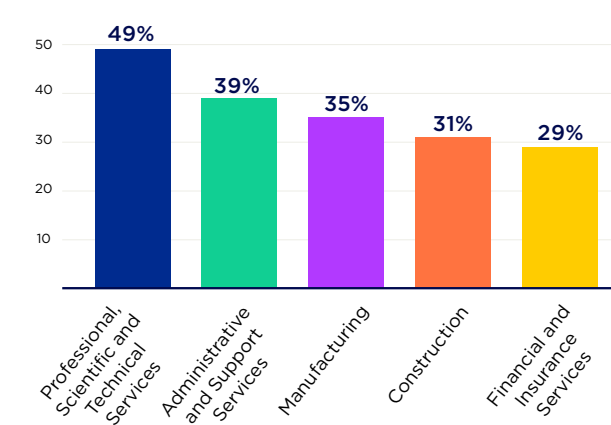


Figure 6. Industries recruited for in the last month; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Top Roles

Demand for professionals was markedly higher than other role types across all industries. Over half of recruiters reported that professional role types showed the highest demand over the previous three months. (see Figure 7)

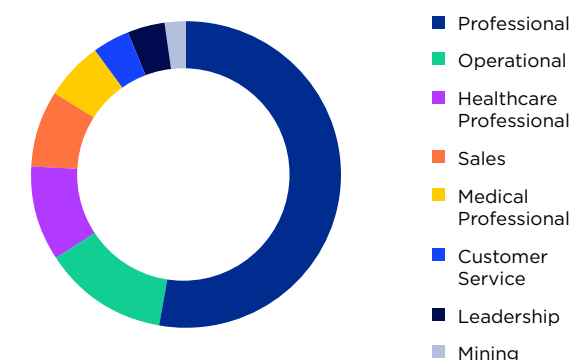


Figure 7 Top roles recruited in the last three months; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Desired Competencies

When recruiting for these roles, recruiters prioritise a range of key candidate competencies. These will vary depending on the industry, but strong communication ability topped the list of desirable competencies with 80% of recruiters reporting employers look for this skill across roles and industries. Interpersonal and self-management skills rounded out the top five key competencies desired by employers for roles across all industries. (see Figure 8)

DESIRED COMPETENCIES

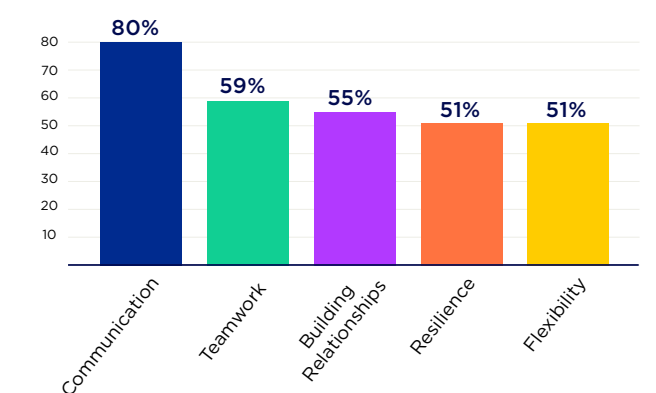


Figure 8. Desired competencies in candidates; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Communication

Quickly understands communications, reads between the lines, and applies the information astutely. Is clear, confident, and articulate. Adapts their communication style to suit the audience, and influences others to see things a given way.

Teamwork

Supports and collaborates with team members to achieve targets. Appreciates the benefits of diversity, works well with a variety of people, and follows through on team commitments.

Building Relationships

Warm, confident and approachable. Usually creates a good first impression and puts others at ease. Gets on well with people at all levels, builds rapport both inside and outside the organisation.

Resilience

Remains calm and optimistic even in stressful situations. Demonstrates strong self-belief and perseveres in the face of setbacks, adjusting rather than giving up.

Flexibility

Highly open and adaptable to new things. Responds to change and feedback enthusiastically, adjusting quickly and calmly with minimal fuss.

Industry Growth and the Potential for it

Growth industries

While this year has presented organisations with many staffing challenges and recruitment has been a low priority for some, new jobs created have now reached similar levels to January 2020. This bodes well for further growth in the recruitment industry and an overall increase in available roles.

As to where these new roles will be created, recruiters expected the healthcare and social assistance industry to be the biggest growth industry over the next year followed closely by the construction industry, more than half of recruiters expected to see growth in these industries over the next 12 months. (see Figure 9)

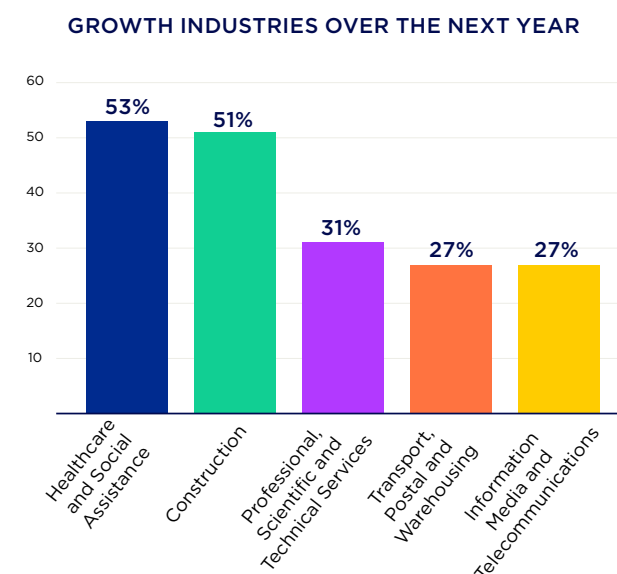


Figure 9. Growth recruitment industries over the next year; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Growing as recruiters

With some client growth expected by agency recruiters and internal organisation growth expected by in-house recruiters, the vast majority of recruiters (84%) are planning on growing their team in the next year, despite the challenges posed by this year. (see Figure 10)

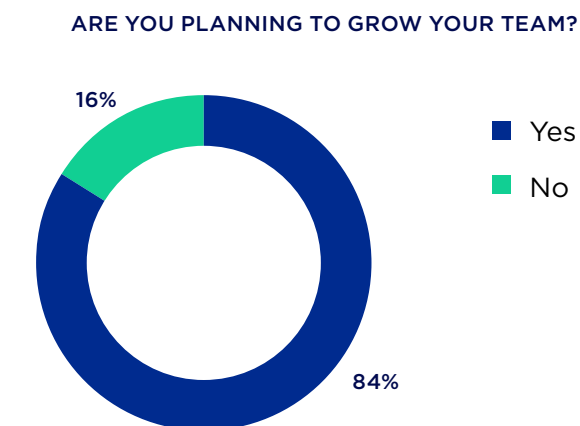


Figure 10. Growing recruitment teams; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

When thinking about growing their own team, recruiters were found to be looking for a combination of interpersonal skills, communication, and resilience when they hire for their own team. They look to fill their ranks with strong relationship builders (84%) and communicators (78%). Following closely behind are resilience, strong customer focus and the ability to negotiate and influence others. (see Figure 11)

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN HIRING RECRUITERS

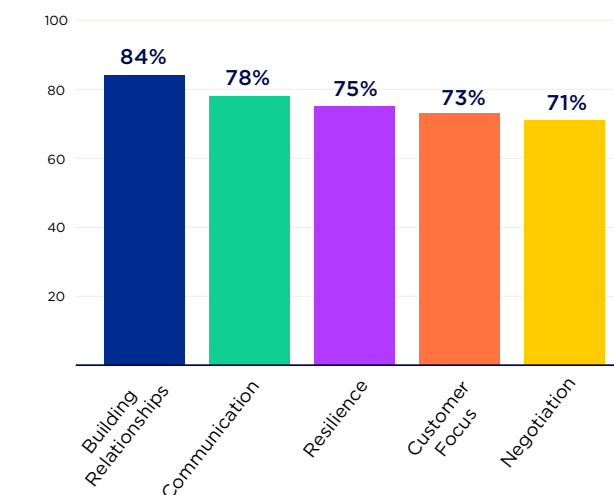


Figure 11. Desired competencies when hiring recruiters; (Talegent; Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA), 2020)

Building Relationships

Warm, confident, and approachable. Usually creates a good first impression and puts others at ease. Gets on well with people at all levels, builds rapport both inside and outside the organisation.

Communication

Quickly understands communications, reads between the lines, and applies the information astutely. Is clear, confident, and articulate. Adapts their communication style to suit the audience, and influences others to see things a given way.

Resilience

Remains calm and optimistic even in stressful situations. Demonstrates strong self-belief and perseveres in the face of setbacks, adjusting rather than giving up.

Customer Focus

Fulfills obligations to internal and external customers. Understands customers' perspectives and responds to social cues appropriately. Treats all customers equally and maintains composure under pressure.

Negotiation

Negotiates well and influences the thoughts and actions of others. Can anticipate and read different situations, adapting their style accordingly. Persuades others to align with their goals.

Conclusion

Throughout this tumultuous year agency and in-house recruiters have faced many challenges. With the long-term impacts of COVID-19 still uncertain on the recruitment industry, Talegent and RCSA analysed the key competencies needed for recruiters to succeed.

It was found that recruiters' strong communication skills helped to get them through this year with 80% of respondent reporting this competency enabled them to be better recruiters. The top five supportive competencies for recruiters are rounded out by a combination of interpersonal skills, customer focus and resilience.

In addition to understanding the competencies needed to succeed, we sought to understand where the industry now sits after the impacts of COVID-19. As we progressed through the pandemic and different stages of lockdowns, job openings fluctuated – hitting a low in April. New jobs created have now reached similar levels to January 2020 and recruiters surveyed believed that the biggest growth in the next 12 months will be based in the healthcare and social assistance industries, followed closely by the construction industry.

Our research delved into the changes in how we recruit, there have been moves to implement digital recruitment processes - which has been a necessity for the majority of recruiters. This year saw dramatic changes in the nature of recruitment with survey responders reporting that they had less face-to-face interactions while using technology to connect with others. In response to the changing nature of work, there was an increase in working remotely with more flexible hours.

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