

How to Select an Applicant Tracking System

So.....you need an Applicant Tracking System. Now what?

There are several key steps to identifying and selecting the best Applicant Tracking System for your organization. The initial component, and arguably the most important part of the process, is to be focused specifically on the needs and requirements of your organization. This article will outline the high level steps your organization should take to make sure you have all the information necessary to move forward with an Applicant Tracking System.

1. Identify Organizational Complexity

First and foremost, a process of introspection needs to take place with respect to your company. Ask yourself the following questions to help you better understand your needs as they relate to the various software vendors in this space;

- What kind of Global requirements do you have?
- What are your language requirements?
- What is your current recruitment model/infrastructure?
- What are the different Hire Types that need recruitment support?

2. Executive Buy-In

Key Executive stakeholders throughout your organization need to be onboard with this project, not just HR Executives. Essentially, during an enterprise rollout of an Applicant Tracking System, some of the key users will be Hiring Managers as well as employees themselves (to apply to internally posted positions). Information about the importance of Talent Management to your organization needs to be filtered Top Down – so every executive shares the vision and strategy for Talent Management with each of their organizations/departments/teams.

3. Budget

Every project related to Applicant Tracking Systems needs a budget. This includes an upfront cost (typically for a consulting engagement to get the software operational), as well as a quarterly/annual budget for ongoing support, maintenance, etc. Here are some questions to better prepare you;

- Is there a budget allocated for this project?
- What is the budget and who owns it?
- Is a Business Case required internally to secure funding for this project?

4. Market Review

Once you have an understanding of your organizational complexity and what budget you have allocated to this project, you can begin your market review of the vendors in the Applicant Tracking System space. Typically your complexity and budget will lead you to either a Tier I, II or III software vendor.

5. Go To Market

a) Preparation of Request for Information or Request for Proposal

Several organizations skip this step, which is absolutely critical to ensure that you are getting the right product and partner, for your company. In order to prepare an RFI or RFP, here's what you will need to do;

- Needs Assessment
 - o What processes are being used today throughout your organization re: recruiting?
 - o What product functionality is required to support your current recruitment processes?
 - o What product functionality is available that you could leverage to enhance your recruitment processes?
 - o Documentation and prioritization of both of the above steps
- Send out RFI/RFP to vendors long listed as per section #4.
 - o Include a request for preliminary Pricing
- Review responses from vendors and determine short list.

b) Product Demonstrations

At this point, you will reach out to the short listed vendors and invite them to show you their product(s). Each vendor will expect either a detailed process script that they can follow during the demonstration, or to discuss with you how you would like the product to be demonstrated. Demo scripts are recommended as they will provide a consistent document for each vendor to follow.

During the Product Demonstrations, your audience should include;

- Key stakeholders (executive sponsor(s) & staffing management)
- Recruiters
- Selected Hiring Managers
- Procurement
- IT

Each audience member should have a copy of the demo script which they must complete with scores and comments.

c) Vendor Selection

Once you have reviewed and tabulated all audience members' documentation, you should be in a position to rank the vendors based on functionality. Cross reference this information with the Directional Pricing information from the RFI/RFP responses, and you should be ready to approach your Executive Sponsor/Budget Owner with a recommendation to move forward.

6. Contract Negotiation

Working with your legal and/or procurement departments to ensure that you are getting the best deal possible.

7. Implementation

This section will be covered in a more in depth article to follow.

BIO:

Marcelo Mackinlay has over 13 years of experience in the recruiting industry, most notably as the Director of Professional Services for Taleo (formerly Recruitsoft) from 2000 – 2005, where he consulted to Fortune 500 companies throughout North America to develop and enhance their Talent Acquisition strategies.

Currently Marcelo is the Managing Director of Mavix Consulting – a Talent Acquisition Consultancy that partners with organizations to identify and implement Talent Acquisition Strategies. With a focus on metrics and analytics, projects include; strategic planning, process review and optimization, and technology vendor evaluation, selection, implementation and optimization. Marcelo has recently completed an Applicant Tracking System needs assessment and vendor evaluation project for one of Canada's largest telecommunications firms, and is currently working with a call centre organization on a staffing transformation project (process, metrics, assessment technology, recruitment infrastructure). www.mavixconsulting.com