seekout>

Talent Acquisition Solution Buyer's Guide

How to evaluate sourcing tools for long-term success

The talent market is in a state of constant change. The last few years have proven that the best way to weather uncertain conditions is to have a strong talent strategy that combines talent acquisition and talent management, all backed by talent intelligence.

From a distance, many sourcing solutions look the same: you search for, find, and connect with qualified candidates. With many available technologies, how do you select the right solution for your organization? Your sourcing solution should ultimately help you address your current needs and support your long–term goals for years to come.

In this guide, we'll look at five seven essential features to consider in your evaluation process. These features represent critical areas that can impact the success of your talent strategy. At the end of the guide, there's also an evaluation checklist to assist you while considering vendors. But first, let's review some challenges that talent acquisition professionals face today.

Sourcing challenges today:

- **Shallow talent pools:** Recruiters are facing narrow talent pools, which get even narrower when it comes to finding specialized or diverse talent. Without access to broad talent pools, candidate search results aren't accurate or relevant, leading to longer hiring times.

- **Incomplete or hidden candidate information:** Finding and sorting through candidate profiles is just the first step. The real test of a powerful sourcing solution comes during the outreach process. If the solution doesn't provide accurate candidate information, candidate engagement can be close to impossible, forcing recruiters to verify information against other platforms.

- **Lack of talent insights:** Talent intelligence is a common feature in today's talent acquisition solutions, but not all solutions provide actionable insights about your workforce or the larger talent market. Without accurate or useful data, recruiters struggle to establish an effective talent strategy and build trust with hiring managers.
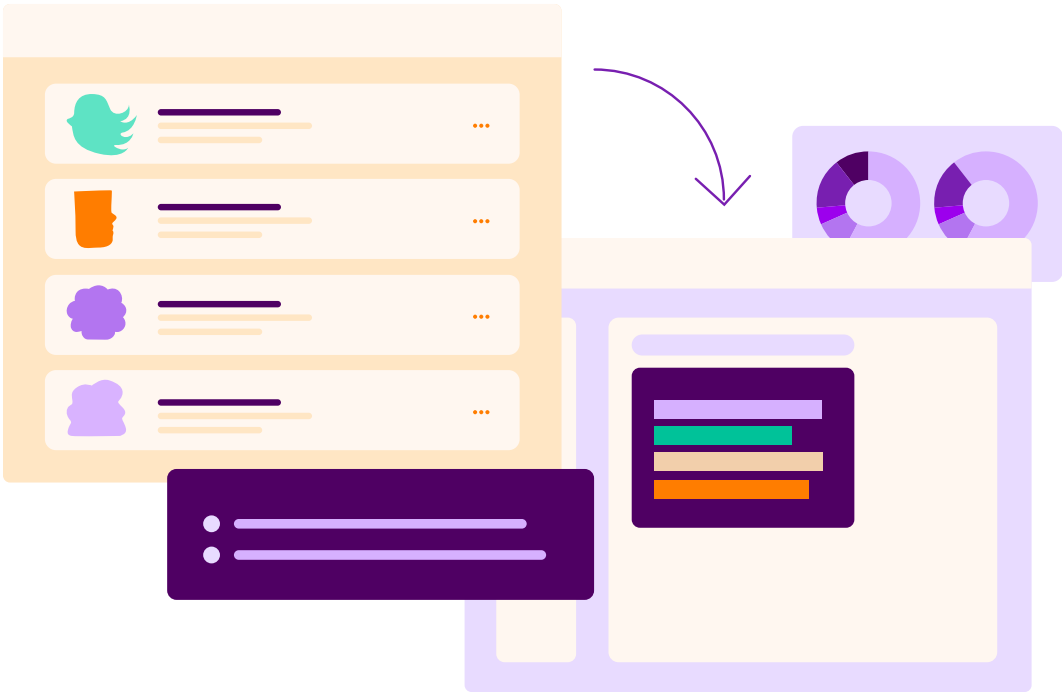
Essential features in a sourcing solution

Companies of all sizes and from all industries are turning to modern technology to find and hire the right talent. As a result, technology solutions are evolving, with comprehensive features like AI-powered search, diversity sourcing and bias reducers, analytics, and integrations with HR systems.

The best solution partners focus on building features that are easy to use and showcase impact. When evaluating sourcing solutions, look closely at the technology—is it intuitive and does it incorporate both internal and external data sources? These are key differentiators that determine a solution's accuracy and effectiveness.

Consider the following seven areas to help you select the right solution for your organization.

1. Broad, diverse talent pools

Finding the right person for a role involves sorting candidates by their qualifications. But as you narrow your candidate list by skills, experience, or expertise, your talent pool gets smaller and smaller, limiting your options. Some solutions only pull information from a limited number of sources, forcing recruiters to look outside their solution for additional candidates. This can also affect the number of diverse candidates that show up in your talent pool.

The right solution will offer a broad talent pool, based on data from various sources. A wider talent pool provides you with a competitive advantage, with fresh lists of qualified candidates, regardless of your search filters.

SeekOut's approach to talent pools

SeekOut offers a complete index of talent, with over 800 million public candidate profiles, including specialized talent pools for technical talent, healthcare talent, diverse talent, cleared candidates, and subject matter experts. SeekOut combines public profile data with external data from sites like GitHub, state licensing boards, and more so you have the most comprehensive view of talent for any role.

SeekOut is a trusted source for finding talent for hard-to-fill roles while prioritizing diversity. Advanced algorithms search for inferred diversity backgrounds with incredible accuracy. Plus, use Bias Reducer to eliminate obvious indicators of race and gender with a simple toggle.

Find 5x more cleared talent than other solutions. Narrow your search results with 12 filters, including Public Trust, Top Secret, Yankee White, and more.

Access 31 million healthcare profiles including a first-of-its kind nursing talent pool. Plus, find doctors, dentists, clinical specialists, and more.

Prioritize representation in your talent pipelines without relying on scarce, self-reported data. Search more than 330 million candidates from underrepresented groups.

From any search in SeekOut, you can zoom out to see the aggregate data about candidates' locations, employers, titles, skills, employment history, diversity, and more. Get a complete view of the talent market with insights about specific companies (including your competitors), roles, and regions—all included, not sold as a separate product. —including insights about your competitors—and tTrack your hiring and diversity goals and. With SeekOut, share talent insights across your company, turning your talent acquisition teams into strategic advisors and improving trust between recruiters and hiring managers.

"Before SeekOut, a difficult-to-fill leadership role in rural Ohio went unfulfilled for 82 days. During the first week of using SeekOut, Trilogy identified a viable pool of candidates for the position and began scheduling hiring interviews."

—Debbie Eberenz, Assistant Vice President of Recruitment, Trilogy Health

2. Effective candidate engagement

Once you've selected a list of potential candidates for a role, the most important next step is outreach. You can't hire a candidate if you can't reach them. It is critical that your sourcing solution supports multiple modes of outreach and provides the most accurate, up-to-date contact information for every candidate. The right solution should pull information from many data sources to ensure accuracy. It should also provide multiple contact points—like email, phone, public profiles, and physical addresses—for higher response rates.

SeekOut's approach to candidate engagement

Instead of providing just one point of contact per candidate, SeekOut surfaces multiple outreach options, including phone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses, and LinkedIn profiles. To ensure the most up-to-date information, SeekOut pulls relevant data from dozens of sources—including LinkedIn, StackOverflow, Github, corporate job posts and descriptions, and more—while working closely with several data providers to regularly add to this list of sources. SeekOut also ranks candidate email addresses using a machine learning classifier to predict and display the most accurate information.

In addition to contact information, SeekOut also prioritizes accuracy and detail for every candidate profile. This helps recruiters better customize their outreach messaging and increase response rates and conversions across the recruiting funnel while creating a positive candidate experience.

In SeekOut, you can retrieve candidate contact information in bulk. Then, build and automate custom outreach campaigns with reusable templates and send emails directly from the platform. Schedule reminders for calls and text messages in addition to LinkedIn messages and connection requests as part of your multi-channel outreach campaign.
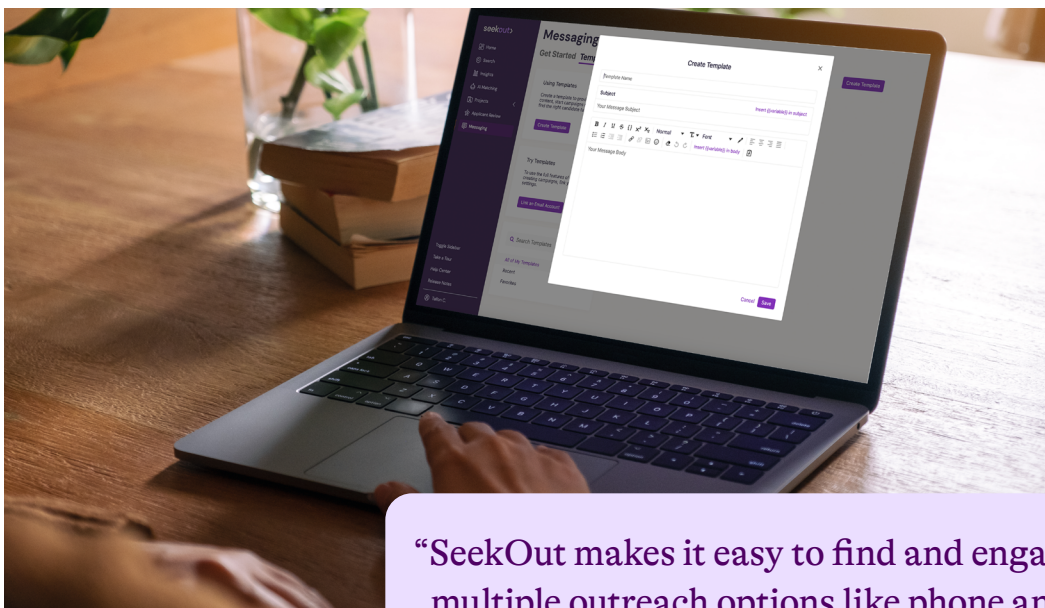
> "SeekOut makes it easy to find and engage with talent through multiple outreach options like phone and email, physical addresses, and LinkedIn profiles. I compared 27 recruiting tools and found SeekOut had more accurate contact info with 85% coverage of candidate data, leading to higher responses rates and conversions across the recruiting funnel.
>
> **—Shally Steckerl,** Founder & CEO, The Sourcing Institute Foundation

3. Powerful and relevant search results

Your sourcing is only as good as your method of searching. The right solution should be able to handle complex talent searches and provide pre-built filters, wildcard, and Boolean search options. Your search should also yield accurate, relevant results. Candidate profiles should match your specified keywords and the results shouldn't display duplicate candidates.

To get accurate results, you need the right data. Your solution should pull candidate information from a variety of reliable sources. For example, some solutions only return candidate information from public profiles like LinkedIn. If a candidate doesn't list all their skills or experience on their profile, then they won't show up in your search. This limits the number of qualified candidates you see and restricts your visibility into the full talent pool.

SeekOut's approach to search

SeekOut's unified profiles contain information from dozens of data sources—not solely public LinkedIn profiles—which means that search results are always complete, accurate, and relevant. It also gives you the power to search for candidates across more than 100 fields, including skillsets, backgrounds, experience, education, diversity, and more. You can even search by specific qualifications, like medical licenses, security clearances, or technical expertise.

Expand the specificity of your search and target desired time frames. Beyond previous titles and companies, you can look for recent alumni, recent hires, or find candidates that held roles at prior organizations during specific windows, like in the last five or ten years.

Individual recruiters within your organization use different search skills and strategies depending on their role and sourcing needs. Boost speed and efficiency for your entire recruiting team with a variety of ways to search, including Boolean syntax and skill-based Smart Matching. SeekOut offers dozens of unique, easy-to-use filters out of the box, including Power Filters, that offer one-click access to candidate attributes without writing complex Boolean strings. Additionally, fine-tune your search with wildcards, smart recommendations, custom search, and more.

For improved efficiency and collaboration, SeekOut allows you to save searches and run them again with a single click. Easily share projects with other sourcers and recruiters, even hiring managers.

"Sourcing candidates became 10x faster using SeekOut. Our team uses SeekOut to find the very best candidates for virtually every customer we serve across Energy, FinTech, Crypto, and government industries—it's that powerful!"

—Alicia Mallany, Vice President, Foxhound Partners

4. Accurate inbound and outbound sourcing

Effective outbound sourcing can have a huge impact on your business, leading to cost savings and faster time-to-hire. The right sourcing solution should support all your talent acquisition needs—both inbound and outbound.

Your solution should help you find qualified candidates, but it should also help you fairly and efficiently review inbound applicants based on their skills and experience and rediscover talent in your Applicant Tracking System (ATS). These features help you process internal applicants and referrals, as well as "silver medalists" who have previously applied to your organization.

A talent acquisition strategy that includes both inbound and outbound sourcing leads to a better candidate experience and strengthens your employer brand.

SeekOut's approach to inbound and outbound sourcing

SeekOut combines talent acquisition and talent management into one platform, including both inbound and outbound sourcing. This allows you to manage your entire talent pipeline across passive, current, and past applicants. You can even engage and disposition applicants directly within the SeekOut platform.

Save hours on inbound sourcing for open roles. SeekOut shows you the most qualified inbound candidates first based on their skills and experience. For outbound sourcing, use powerful search and filtering to find passive talent. Create a list of qualified candidates in record time with SeekOut's Smart Match, which builds a search from your job description to recommend a list of top candidates.

In addition to new candidates, SeekOut resurfaces past candidates in your ATS so you can rediscover talent who have expressed interest in your organization or have already gone through the interview process. Plus, you can fairly and efficiently review job applicants and spotlight the most qualified talent based on specific requirements.

Regardless of your talent strategy, you need actionable insights at every stage of your talent lifecycle. Use built-in talent insights in SeekOut to inform inclusive job descriptions, build targeted job campaigns, advertise roles in the right localities, and more. Additionally, get end-to-end visibility with Pipeline Insights to understand which actions will drive impact and improve your chances of landing top candidates.

1/2 of respondents say talent acquisition is an essential or pivotal human capital issue in their organization.

However, just 2/5 (39%) say their TA capabilities are above average and a mere 8% say their capabilities are 'top notch.'

HR Research, The Future of Talent Acquisition, 2022–23
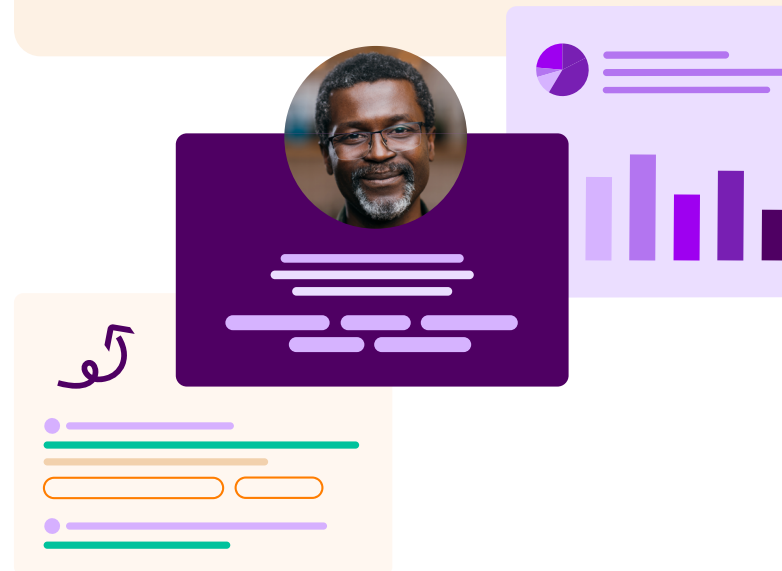
"SeekOut is my go-to, it's what I eat, sleep, breathe. The diversity tags allow my team to effectively and efficiently reach individuals from underrepresented groups every single day. And SeekOut's market insights have helped us shift our hiring manager's perspectives and redefine what a 'good Salesforce fit' means."

—Michelle Williams
  Diversity Sourcing Advisor & Team Lead, Salesforce

5. Proactive compliance, data privacy, and security

Prioritizing data privacy, security, and compliance in the selection of talent solutions is crucial for protecting candidate and employee data, maintaining regulatory compliance, building trust, and mitigating the risk of data breaches or legal repercussions. HR leaders must safeguard their organization's reputation and ensure ethical and responsible data management practices throughout the recruitment process.

Failures can expose employers to material legal issues, including private lawsuits, government investigations, regulatory fines, and enforcement decisions—not to mention, significant reputational damage. As both the regulatory landscape and HR technology offerings continue to evolve, it is critical that you choose a partner who is invested in protecting your brand with proactive compliance, data privacy, and security.

SeekOut's approach to compliance

At SeekOut, the security of our customers' data and compliance with legal requirements are our top priorities. SeekOut is committed to earning and maintaining the trust of our customers. We design our software and business practices to protect customer data. SeekOut's software platform and corporate policies and procedures are compliant with global standards and trusted by many Fortune 500 enterprises.

SeekOut is fully committed to complying with the requirements of the GDPR and is US/EU Privacy Shield Certified. We've taken robust measures to protect private customer and candidate information, including our investment in Microsoft Azure Service architecture, a cloud infrastructure with more certifications than any other cloud provider including SOC 2, ISO/IEC, CSA/CCM, ITAR, CJIS, HIPAA and IRS 1075.

Additionally, SeekOut deploys encryption at rest, strong access controls, and offers a Privacy Control Center. Finally, our generative AI solution, which utilizes a GPT–4 integration, is a custom and confidential solution, meaning inputs and data do not flow back into the public domain, nor are shared with any other user.
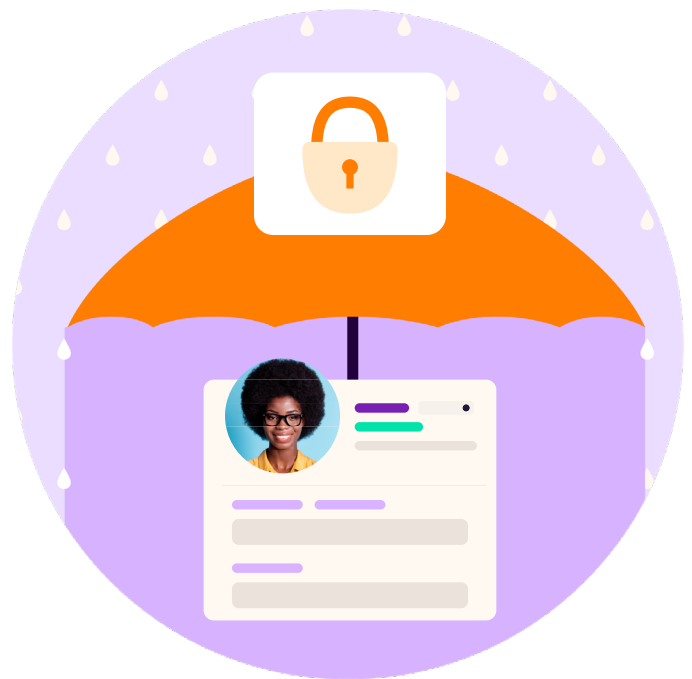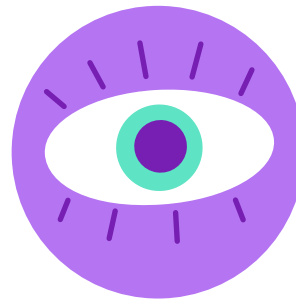
6. Ethical and responsible AI usage

Advancements in AI have the potential to forever change the ways we hire, engage, grow, and support our people. AI offers incredible efficiency through its speed and thoroughness of analysis, ability to automate repetitive tasks, and power of personalization at scale. However, a thoughtful approach to implementing AI is essential to mitigate its many risks, which include biased training data, unexplainable outcomes, and legal noncompliance. For example, New York City is paving the way for AI regulation with its recent law restricting the use of AI in making hiring decisions.

It's unlikely that HR leaders can rely on large companies behind today's hottest generative AI solutions to ensure compliance. Rather, the best way to protect your organization from irresponsible practices and potential legal consequences is to choose a solution provider who is knowledgeable, thoughtful, and proactive in compliance and ethical AI usage when it comes to integrating these technologies with their platform.

SeekOut's approach to AI

SeekOut is creating innovative ways for recruiters and HR leaders to find and grow talent—and this includes incorporating new technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning. As an important partner to our customers' People teams, we take ethics and transparency very seriously—especially where considering AI and machine learning.

One of SeekOut's core values is to be human-driven, AI-assisted—this means people are always in control. We employ AI to elevate human decision-making, not automate it. SeekOut is committed to ethical AI usage and developed a Responsible AI program, which includes:

- A responsible AI council with key stakeholders from across the business, including leadership and experts in product development and legal.

- Guiding principles to help us operate with transparency and accountability, advance inclusion, and reduce inequalities as we thoughtfully integrate AI into our platform.

- Internal testing and external validation to ensure our solutions offer customers and individuals mechanisms to understand and control by design, preventing harm and maintaining compliance.

- Membership with the Responsible AI Institute, the TechNet Council, and third-party AI bias audit with Credo AI.

> "SeekOut is definitely on the cutting edge... applying the most thoughtful approach to assistive candidate outreach that I've seen."
>
> —**Glen Cathey**, SVP, Talent Advisory & Digital Strategy, Randstad

7. Seamless implementation and integration

Future-proofing your talent strategy means choosing the right solution partner. As you consider a long-term sourcing solution, don't forget about implementation and integration. Make sure that your solution integrates with your ATS and Candidate Relationship Manager (CRM) in addition to your HR systems. Your solution partner should also provide ongoing support to set you up for long-term success, from onboarding and initial setup questions to technical support as you scale.

SeekOut's approach to support

SeekOut is a proven partner, trusted by over 1000 leading global brands and serving 6 out of the top 10 most valuable companies in the United States. SeekOut integrates with the leading ATS, CRM, and HCM (Recruiting) solutions in the market today, including Workday, iCIMS, Greenhouse, Bullhorn, and Lever—so you can have all your HR and recruiting data at your fingertips.

To ensure that you get the most value out of SeekOut now and in the future, we approach implementation and support based on four core pillars:

- **Onboarding.** SeekOut provides individual onboarding and training for each user and works with your leadership to define shared onboarding goals alongside SeekOut's customer success team.

- **Customization & Support.** SeekOut provides live in-app assistance via chat or email. Additionally, SeekOut customer success managers will develop custom Power Filters to improve the accuracy of your sourcing tasks and provide individual assistance to improve specific searches.

- **Ongoing Training.** Training is provided during the full length of your engagement with SeekOut, including video tutorials, a robust online help center, bi-weekly live refresher training, and case studies with relevant sourcing examples.

- **Reporting.** Your CSM team creates administrative reports based on your use cases that help you get the most out of your SeekOut deployment.

"The customer service has been amazing! The platform is easy to use and to teach to new hires and [our CSM] has been flawless at teaching us tips and tricks to learn how to use SeekOut to its fullest potential."

—**Jonah M.,** Recruiting Marketing and Sourcing Lead, Verified G2 Review

Evaluating sourcing solutions

Look out for red flags

Now that we've reviewed essential features for sourcing solutions, let's review some red flags to watch out for in your evaluations. These red flags represent technology or feature gaps that could impact the long-term effectiveness of your solution.

▶ **Limited talent pools:** The solution doesn't address all your sourcing needs, especially for specialized talent like technical talent, healthcare talent, cleared candidates, and subject matter experts.

▶ **Irrelevant search results:** Your queries surface candidates that don't match your criteria as you scroll through the pages.

▶ **Inaccurate results from pre-built search filters:** The solution shows candidate profiles that don't match your search or contain outdated information around skills or experience.

▶ **Outdated contact information:** Your candidate outreach consistently shows low response and high bounce rates, indicating inaccurate contact information. This leads to slower outreach and low engagement.

▶ **Low quality peer reviews:** Check trusted review sites like G2, Capterra, and TrustRadius. The most obvious red flag is a lack of quality reviews, but also consider the types of organizations leaving reviews. If they only show reviews from SMB or mid-market organizations for example, this could be a sign that the solution isn't enterprise-ready or scalable.

Assess your return on investment

Your sourcing solution should address your current talent acquisition needs alongside your future talent management goals. To ensure that you're getting the most value out of your investment, ask yourself the following questions:

1. **How does the solution support scalability and flexibility?** Your solution shouldn't limit the scale of your searches or the types of candidates that you can find. The solution should be future-proof, supporting multiple levels of organizational growth and providing enterprise-level service and integrations.

2. **Does the solution increase recruiter efficiency and reduce time to hire?** Your solution should be intuitive and easy to use, and more importantly, it should streamline existing processes and open up new opportunities to find and engage candidates.

3. **Does the solution increase trust between recruiters and hiring managers?** Your solution should support your talent strategy planning, providing insights based on real candidate data, market data, and employee data, while keeping this data secure and compliant. It should provide tools to share those insights between recruiters and hiring managers and encourage dialogue.

4. **Is the solution partner committed to your long-term success?** Your solution partner should provide a stellar customer experience, addressing your short-term goals and providing ongoing CSM support as you scale your talent acquisition function.

5. **Does the solution prioritize diversity?** Your solution should enable you to easily find diverse candidates, with advanced search and diversity filters that have built-in bias reducers to prevent unconscious bias in the recruiting process. It should also provide insights into representation in your talent pool and the wider talent market to inform workplace planning and recruiting priorities.

Divseristy Analytics

SeekOut is your trusted and proven solution partner

SeekOut helps organizations create a holistic talent strategy across internal and external talent—combining talent acquisition, talent management, and talent analytics into one unified platform.

SeekOut has earned awards and validation for our market-leading platform and the success it brings to our customers. Recognized as a clear leader in sourcing and talent intelligence, SeekOut is trusted by over 1000+ customers, from human resources and recruiting to talent research.

SeekOut is built on a powerful data and intelligence engine, bringing together data from external sources and your internal HR systems to create a clear picture of your current and future talent.

SeekOut named #1 Enterprise Diversity and Talent Intelligence Software by G2 for usability, fast implementation, and positive customer experience.

Get a demo and see how the SeekOut provides customers with a competitive edge that accelerates and maximizes business impact.

Evaluation checklist: choose the right Talent Acquisition solution provider

Selecting a vendor? Use the following checklist to ensure that the solution provides all the features and support you need for short and long-term success.

Rate each solution on a scale from one to five (five being the highest) for each of the features. Tally up your scores and take these rankings into consideration during your evaluation process.

	Vendor 1 (score 1–5)	Vendor 2 (score 1–5)	Vendor 3 (score 1–5)
Talent pools: Are your specialized talent pools large enough to give you access to fresh qualified candidates?			
Search precision and relevance: Do search features support both entry-level and power users? Is your search result precise and relevant to the query, even beyond the first few pages of results?			
DEIB: Can you easily source prospects from underrepresented groups? Do these features help reduce unconscious bias and help you search for diverse candidates outside of just race and gender?			
Candidate profile and engagement: Does the solution provide up-to-date candidate contact information (both email and phone) to engage with the candidates, both individually and in bulk?			
Talent mapping and analytics: Does the solution provide data insights for recruiters and hiring managers to optimize their recruitment marketing and engagement strategies?			
Holistic platform: Does your solution provider support both inbound and outbound talent scenarios in one platform?			
Collaboration: Does the solution provide data insights that enable a strategic partnership between stakeholders?			
Integrations: Does the solution easily integrate into your recruiting technology stack, like your ATS and Talent CRM? Once integrated, do you have the import, export, and reporting functionality your teams will need?			
Ethical AI: If artificial intelligence (AI) is built into the platform, has it been externally audited for bias, regulatory compliance, and effectiveness?			
Proactive compliance: Does your solution provider protect private customer and candidate data, offer a Privacy Control Center, and ensure that foreign entities cannot access your data?			
Market recognition: Does the solution provider have a large and respectable customer base? Have you looked at user reviews on G2, Capterra and Trust Radius, and checked G2 quadrants for talent intelligence and diversity sourcing, to see who is best-in-class?			
Strong partnership: Is the solution enterprise-ready, and will you get a dedicated customer success manager who is committed to your success?			
Product innovation: Is the solution provider committed to investing in the product and have the resources to do so? Do they have a growing technology and support-focused team?			
Total score:			