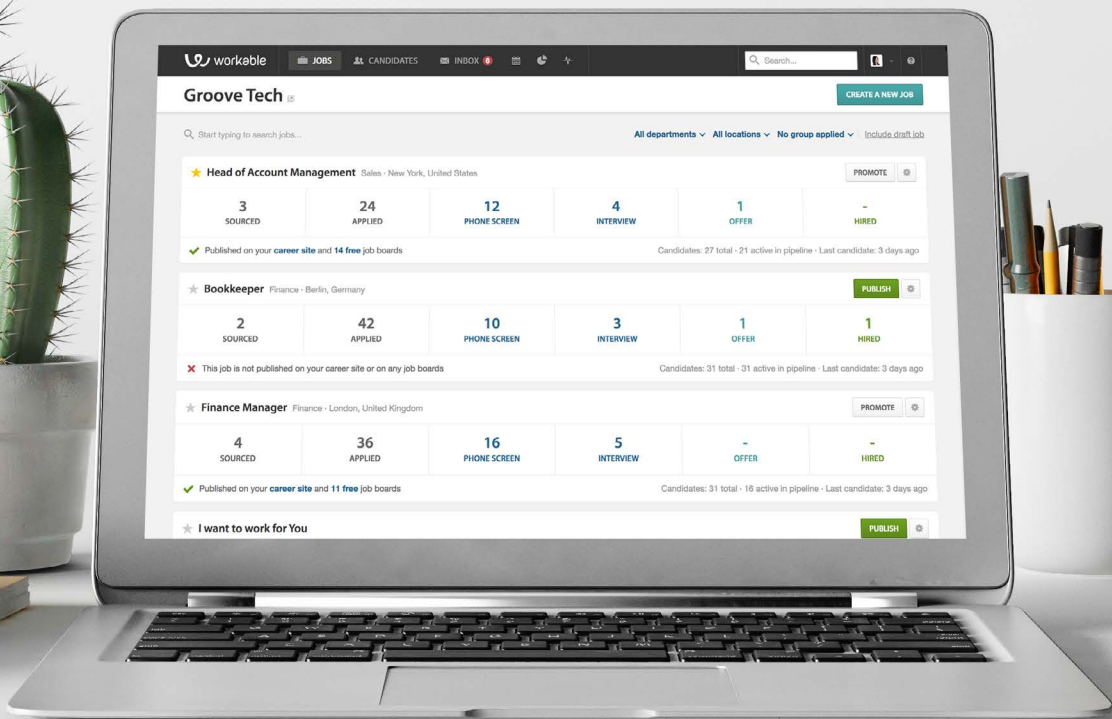


The ATS Buyer's Guide

Uncover the features you really need and find out how to assess the options available.



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Introduction

The quality of a company's hires is the single best predictor of its future success. Software should be at the heart of getting this right but for far too long applicant tracking systems (ATS) have gotten in the way of business success. In recent years a new breed of ATS has started to right this wrong.

The first generation of ATSs evolved to help employers take that old standby, the paper resume, and scan it into a database. Like most technologies that replicate the analogue way of doing things, it left a lot of room for improvement. Some of that improvement came with the first online applicant tracking systems – but end users found them unnecessarily complicated and hard to use.

Bad software meant human resources, recruitment and talent sourcing teams were underserved by technology, left to peek over the shoulders of their better-served counterparts in sales and marketing.

The advent of the cloud has spurred a renaissance in recruiting software that is delivering a sophisticated and streamlined hiring process to companies of all sizes. More intuitive design and smarter features are changing what's possible. Now, along with the tools to track and manage candidates, integrated sourcing options are helping to fill the talent pipeline. The ATS is no longer the poor cousin of the CRM.



Do you need an ATS?

At Workable we speak to thousands of companies who want to improve their hiring process. Every organization is unique, so this can mean different things to different companies. Broadly speaking, we've found three common scenarios driving the search for a better way to hire.

1. Growing pains

Fast growth too often means an unpredictable hiring process and mixed results. Companies with growing pains are typically looking for some predictability and structure across candidate sourcing and hiring.

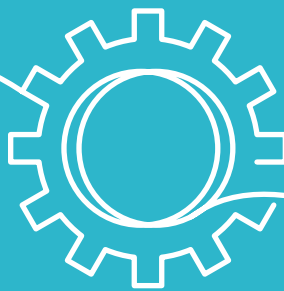
2. Drowning in email and spreadsheets

A traditional approach to hiring means trying to stay afloat with manual methods like email and spreadsheets. Email folders for resumes and columns of feedback in Excel are no longer scalable. Companies are looking for more efficient ways to manage candidates and collaborate as a team.

3. Outdated software

The existing ATS has passed its sell by date. Clunky and hard to use, it's shunned by hiring managers. Outdated software fails to help with hiring goals and companies in this situation are looking for a modern, efficient approach to deliver on the original promise of an ATS.

A modern ATS, chosen with the right criteria, will relieve these common pain points. Take a step back and think about how your recruiting could be improved with the right tool.



Building a use case

Wrestling with a broken hiring system is a thankless task. Typically the only team who knows the hiring process is broken is the team doing it. Sometimes it's just one person and they're suffering in silence. *If you're reading this, it's probably you.*

Remember the consequences of this struggle will take a toll on the rest of the business. Acting decisively now can turn a struggle into a competitive advantage, as you fix something that too many companies are failing to address.

But you need to make a case for changing the status quo. Here are some common pain points we've encountered to get you started:

- ✓ Your careers page isn't up to date or it's not showcasing your employer brand. You want a beautiful, up to date careers site but you can't find the resources to make one and you're not sure how it would be maintained.
- ✓ You're spending more time than ever submitting the same job ad to multiple job boards.
- ✓ Irrelevant applications from unqualified candidates are choking your inbox.
- ✓ Sourcing passive candidates and manually entering data into a spreadsheet or database takes more time than you have.
- ✓ Candidates are applying from multiple sources and without a central repository there's no way to track who came from where.
- ✓ Interviews are not delivering the best hires. It's impossible to review all relevant feedback on candidates and prep for interviews quickly.
- ✓ You're wasting time manually compiling hiring reports. You want to take stock of your hiring efforts but there's no real data to work with.
- ✓ You saw a potential star last time you were hiring but the position wasn't right. Now you're hiring again you can't find them.
- ✓ You had a great candidate but the hiring team was slow to deliver feedback. The candidate experience was poor and they turned the job down.
- ✓ There's no process. People are hiring in different ways and there is no transparency or repeatability.

Start by putting together your own list which can become your case for making an investment in new recruiting software.



Tim Sackett [@TimSackett](#)

HR/Recruiting Talent Pro

We moved into this space in our history where recruiting technology has never been so affordable, meaning organizations no longer have an excuse not to have it. Great tech is so cheap now that if you don't have it, you're making a personal choice to stay in the dark ages of recruiting! For SMBs this has never been more real. SMBs can now have even better recruiting technology than their enterprise peers. While enterprise folks get big, vanilla based recruiting technology, SMB shops can move faster to integrate the latest and greatest tech on the market. It's such an exciting time to be in talent acquisition, the availability of world class technology is transforming how we all recruit on a daily basis



What's your budget?

Prior to the arrival of a new generation of applicant tracking systems your choice was basically a toss up between two flawed options:

- 1) A robust but clunky and expensive ATS
- 2) An affordable ATS that lacked the necessary features

Happily there is now more choice and better options.

The kind of features that large corporations were spending their entire software budget on are now available to ambitious companies of all sizes. In fact, it's the multinationals who have been left wondering whether it's time to leave legacy software behind and move to modern cloud-based solutions.

The ROI of recruiting software


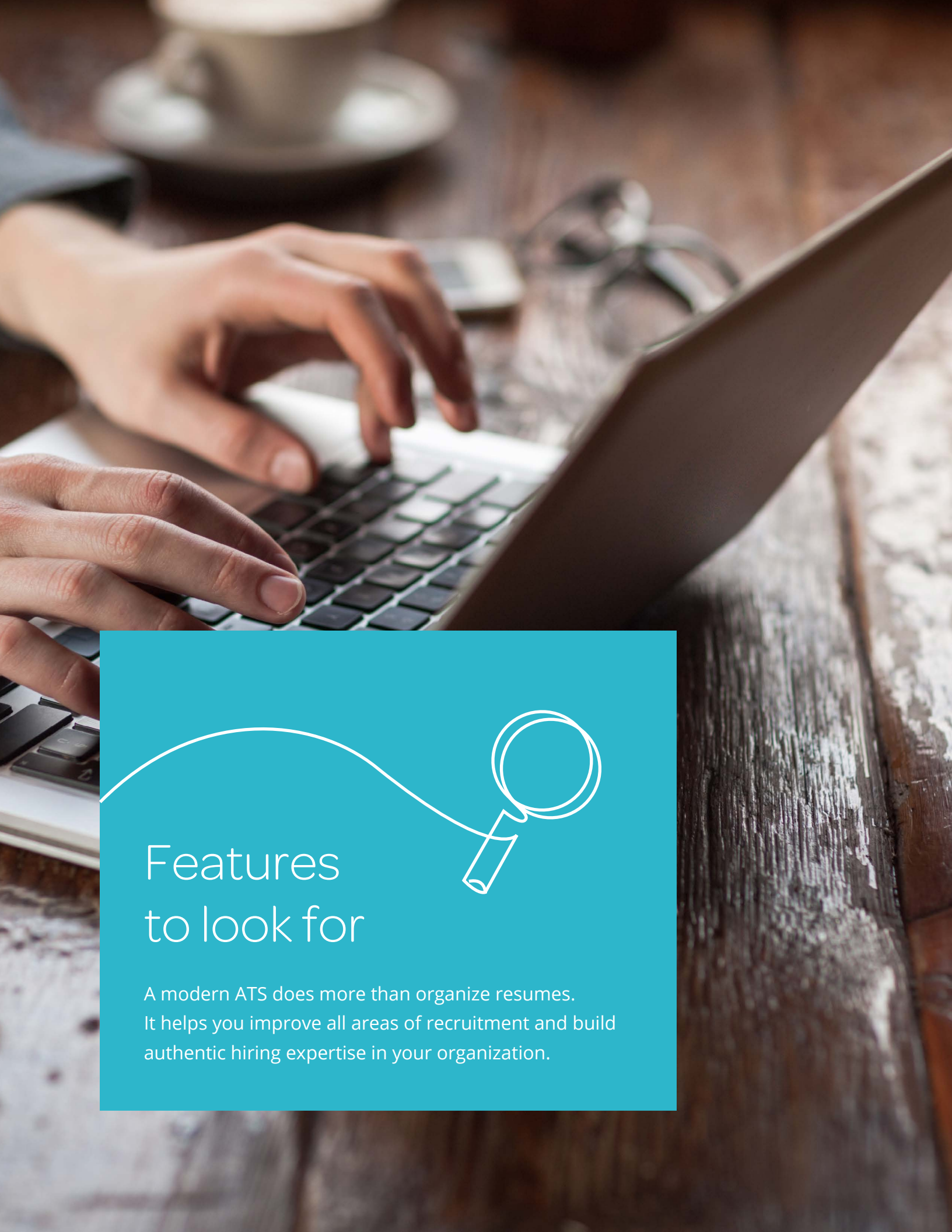
The most obvious advantage is the time saved throughout the hiring process:

- ✓ Faster resume screening
- ✓ Quicker interview scheduling
- ✓ Faster and more informed decision-making.

This time is golden. But a modern ATS does more than save time, it helps attract the best candidates with smart sourcing features and unlocks better hiring decisions by delivering the data you need when you need it.

Considering free software?

When budgets are severely constrained, free software can be tempting. It can work for teams who have the technical capacity to install it, adapt it and maintain it. Even then it means living without many of the standard features of the modern ATS. A solution that's free now can be very expensive in the medium to long term.



Features to look for

A modern ATS does more than organize resumes. It helps you improve all areas of recruitment and build authentic hiring expertise in your organization.

Candidate sourcing

There are two ways to hire the best candidate: attract candidates to your careers page, or proactively source passive candidates from networks and communities online. Your ATS should have tools to help with both scenarios.

- ✓ Your careers page is the shop window for your company. A modern ATS will deliver a beautiful careers page and maintain it for you.
- ✓ Job boards are still one of the quickest ways to tap into the active candidate market. A modern ATS makes posting to multiple job boards a simple, single submission. Is the ATS only integrated with a small number of free boards or does it give you access to paid or specialist boards?
- ✓ If you're hunting for harder to find passive candidate a modern ATS should offer smart tools like browser extensions to copy profiles from social networks to the candidate pool in your ATS.
- ✓ A modern ATS should take the data entry out of hiring, while more advanced ones will automatically enrich your candidate profiles with data from public sources like social media.

Note: When you're ready to evaluate specific products or do a product demo, jump to the Modern ATS evaluation checklist [at the end of this guide.](#)

- ✓ Referrals are well known to be the best source of candidates. A robust ATS will make it easy for your colleagues to refer candidates even if they don't have a resume, boosting the number of referrals you receive.

Applicant tracking and talent CRM

Candidate management is the bread and butter of an ATS. The best applicant tracking systems help you organize your hiring into structured pipelines and offer smart tools like bulk email. Simple features for creating interview kits and structured interview feedback will deliver better informed hiring decisions.

By providing a clear structure and repeatable process, a modern ATS keeps you on track with your hiring plan as you scale your company.

Reporting

To master hiring you need to be able to dig into your process, understand what's working well and where there is room for improvement. A modern ATS should offer robust reporting and analytics without the accompanying headache of compiling data sets.

These are the key reports to look for:

- ✓ Candidate Source Reports
- ✓ Pipeline Reports
- ✓ Time to Hire Reports
- ✓ Productivity Reports

Already an advanced data analyst, or on your way to becoming one? Look out for

an ATS that can provide your raw recruiting data so you can conduct your own custom analysis in tools like Tableau or Chart.io.

Collaboration and ease of use

A modern ATS recognizes that hiring is a team sport, with a range of colleagues involved in the process from early phases like candidate screening, through to interviews and offers. Smart collaboration tools enable a more transparent flow of information.

A modern ATS gets teams to buy into its benefits by being simple and intuitive to use.

When everyone from recruiters, to HR directors, hiring managers and the CEO can hire in concert, it delivers real, measurable improvement.

Mobile

You, your hiring managers and exec team are working from mobile. Modern software we use at work is accessible on mobile, why should your recruiting software be the exception?

When reviewing an ATS look closely at the mobile functionality available. Too often this is limited to a basic feature set, meaning you're still locked to your desktop. The best ATS will provide all the features you need to hire on the go. They'll highlight the most important recruiting tasks, and alert you to candidates that need attention, providing full access to your candidate database and candidates' profiles.

Decide how your team will work best. Are you happy with a mobile version of the desktop application or would your team engage faster with a native Android or iOS app?

Security and Performance

When you're handling sensitive candidate information, you need to be sure that it's secure, and that your company remains compliant with local data protection laws.

- ✓ How secure is your data and what information can they provide you with on their security features?
- ✓ Do they offer a Service Level Agreement for availability/uptime?
- ✓ How often do they release new features?
- ✓ Do they maintain a public page where you can view historic downtime?
- ✓ Will you receive advance notification of scheduled maintenance or downtime?
- ✓ Can they tell you what their next releases are and when to expect them?



Get to know the vendor

A Modern ATS will have all the features you need. It will take the hassle out of the setup, help with team onboarding and support you for as long as you're a customer. These are some important questions to ask any potential ATS provider.

1. How many customers do they have?

- ✓ Are they a go-to solution for 1000s of companies?

2. Are they well-rated on software review sites? Try:

- ✓ [SoftwareAdvice.com](https://www.softwareadvice.com)
- ✓ [GetApp.com](https://www.getapp.com)
- ✓ [Capterra.com](https://www.capterra.com)
- ✓ [TrustPilot.com](https://www.trustpilot.com)

3. Do they offer onboarding assistance?

- ✓ Will they help set up your account?
- ✓ Do they offer training to get you started?
- ✓ How long does the set up usually take for a company like yours?

4. What support do they offer?

- ✓ Is it email only or do they offer phone support too?
- ✓ What is their average response time?
- ✓ What time zones do they cover?
- ✓ Do they have 24 hour support coverage or do they only offer support during working hours?
- ✓ Do they have international support teams to cover you and your colleagues in other countries around the clock ?

- ✓ Will you have an account manager?
- ✓ Do they have online support resources and video guides?



You're set!

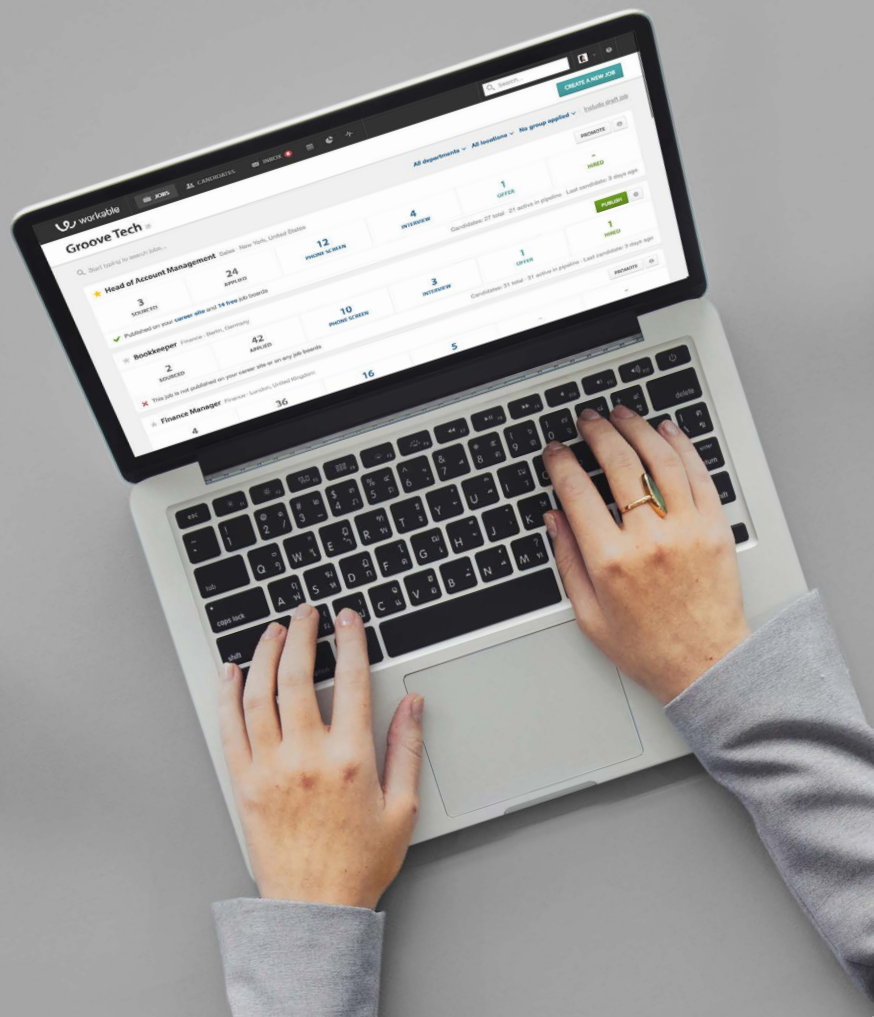
You're ready to start evaluating and move a step closer to improving your hiring with a Modern ATS. Next steps? Use the **evaluation checklist** to make the right choice for your company.



About Workable

Workable is trusted by over 5000 companies globally, to streamline their hiring. From posting a job to sourcing candidates, Workable provides the tools you need to manage multiple hiring pipelines. Transparent communication, organized candidate profiles, structured interviews and a full reporting suite gives hiring teams the information they need to make the right choice. Workable is available for desktop and mobile.

OVER 5000 COMPANIES TRUST WORKABLE TO
STREAMLINE THEIR HIRING, INCLUDING:





ATS evaluation | VENDOR NAME:

GETTING STARTED AND ONGOING SUPPORT

How many customers do they have?

What onboarding assistance is offered?
How much will it cost?

How long does it take the average company to implement?

Can they migrate data from your existing ATS/spreadsheets?

Is the support email only or is phone support also available?

Is there an additional cost for ongoing support?

What is their average response time to support emails?

Do they have customer support teams in multiple countries to support international offices?

Is support available 7 days per week?

Are online support articles provided and easily accessible?

What documentation is available regarding the application's security and performance?

What is the uptime Service Level Agreement (SLA)?


Is a free trial available?


CANDIDATE SOURCING

Do they offer a free hosted careers page?

Do they offer a customizable and embeddable job widget to work with your existing careers page?

Do they offer customizable application forms?

 ATS evaluation VENDOR NAME:	
Do they support mobile optimized job descriptions and application forms?	
Can candidates apply with LinkedIn?	
How large is their job board syndication network?	
Is there an employee referral program?	
Do they provide unique job links for sharing via social media?	
Is there a Chrome extension for sourcing?	
Can they offer an external recruiter portal?	
Do they support resume parsing?	
Can they support bulk resume upload?	
Do they have automatic candidate source tracking?	
APPLICANT TRACKING	
Do they offer hiring pipelines to keep candidates organized by job and stage?	
Can they support interview scheduling with calendar integration?	
Is there an easy way for the hiring team to add a candidate rating or evaluation?	
Do they offer interview kits to prepare hiring managers	
Do they offer inbuilt scorecards for interview feedback?	
Can you run background checks within the product?	
Is it mobile ready?	

 ATS evaluation VENDOR NAME:	
REPORTING	Do they offer candidate source reports to identify your best candidate sources?
	Do they support current and historic pipeline reports to track the existing and historic state of your hiring funnel?
	Can they provide productivity reports to track hiring activities over time?
	Do they offer time to hire / time to fill reports?
	Can they monitor referral tracking and reporting?
	Do they provide automatic EEO/OFCCP surveys and reports?
	Do they integrate with business intelligence tools?
TALENT CRM	
	Can they provide 2-way email sync?
	Can they support bulk email?
	Do they offer customizable email templates?
	Are candidate profiles automatically enriched with social media links?
	Do they have a searchable candidate database?
	Can you set "Snooze" reminders to contact candidates?
COLLABORATION & EASE OF USE	
	Is there a limit to the number of users they support?



ATS evaluation | VENDOR NAME:


Do they offer privacy settings for confidential notes/emails?


What are the different user-level access rights?


Are there comment and messaging functions for team collaboration?

Do they have a user-friendly interface that requires minimal training?

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ATS FEATURES CHECKLIST				
CAREERS PAGES				
Brandable, hosted careers site				
Customizable application forms				
Optimized for desktop & mobile				
API for custom integrations				
Widget to auto-update existing pages				
JOB ADVERTISING				
Free job board integrations				
Premium job board integrations				
Social referral links				
Facebook Jobs Tab				
Candidate source reports				
CANDIDATE SOURCING				
Integrated sourcing tool				
Automatic social profile gathering				
Trackable employee referrals				
Resume parsing				
Add candidates via email				
APPLICANT TRACKING				
Visual pipelines / intuitive interface				
Candidate profile and timeline				
Fast application review				
Bulk progress / disqualify				
Candidate evaluations at every stage				
Trackable team communication				
2-way email sync (Gmail / Outlook...)				

ATS FEATURES CHECKLIST				
APPLICANT TRACKING (CONT'D)				
Bulk email with duplicate detection				
Private comments for hiring managers				
INTERVIEWS				
Interview scheduling				
External calendar integration				
Custom interview stages				
Interview kits for multiple stages				
Scorecards for multiple stages				
Aggregated scorecard results				
Company-wide interview templates				
Automated interview reminders				
TALENT CRM				
Talent pool creation				
Searchable candidate database				
Share candidates externally				
Snooze a candidate				
Trackable candidate communication				
TEAM COLLABORATION				
User access rights and permissions				
Task management and alerts				
Include external recruiters				
MOBILE RECRUITING				
Mobile-optimized website				
Dedicated Android app				
Dedicated iOS app				

ATS FEATURES CHECKLIST				
REPORTS & ANALYTICS				
Integrated reporting suite				
Candidate Source Report				
Hiring Pipeline Report				
Time to Hire Report				
Productivity Report				
Custom analytics				
SUPPORT				
Dedicated account manager				
Onboarding assistance				
In-app live chat in correct timezone				
Phone support				
Email support				
Help center				
INTEGRATIONS				
HRIS (HR information systems)				
Email / calendar				
Background checks				
EEO / OFCCP compliance				
Job boards & social networks				
LinkedIn / LinkedIn Recruiter				
Custom integrations via private API				
SECURITY				
US / EU data protection				
SSL & data encryption				
Disaster recovery				