



The recruiting team's guide to talent operations

What talent ops is, what it does, and best practices straight from the mouths of recops professionals





Table of Contents

Introducing Talent Operations	2
What Is Talent Operations?	5
Why Is Talent Ops So Critical to a Modern TA Function?	6
A Conversation with Chelsea Cohen, Manager of Recruiting Ops at FullStory	8
What Ops “Owns”: Responsibilities	10
A Conversation with Max Butler, Manager of Global Talent Acquisition Operations at Bain & Company.....	16
A Conversation with Viet Nguyen, Head of Customer Talent Advisory at Gem	18
Talent Ops KPIs	20
A Conversation with Annie Lee, Recruiting Strategy & Operations at DoorDash.....	26
A Conversation with Mike Joyner, Partner at Growth by Design Talent	27
Opening/Stepping Into the Role.....	29
The Future of Talent Ops	33
Gem Talent Compass.....	34

Introducing Talent Operations: TA's emerging-and-evolving function

In the following, we lay out the fundamentals and dig into the details of recruiting operations: what it is, why it's so critical to a modern TA function, the scope of its responsibilities, what its KPIs look like, and first steps for breaking into the role.

We've also spoken with Talent Ops professionals at FullStory, DoorDash, Bain & Company and more, to get you insights into how their orgs are thinking about the RecOps function, their journeys to their respective roles, and what they've learned along the way.

In the years prior to the pandemic, it was an easy case to make that the talent acquisition function had evolved from being a reactive, job-posting service provider to a *proactive*, future-looking, strategic-insight-providing function, equipped with emerging technologies and data points to undertake everything from long-term nurture to forecasting to employer branding. But with the the pandemic came virtual processes, reassessments of employer value propositions and required soft skills, uncertainties about the future of work, and more. Teams are now back in growth mode; candidates are less constrained by geography; and the past two-plus years have caused many of them to rethink what they want in a role. It's not a long shot to say that hiring has never been harder.

Add to *this* that scaling introduces more variables: more people, more tools with the potential for disconnected systems and processes, more data that runs the risk of being siloed, a mishmash of strategies that lead to inconsistent hiring experiences. Late in 2020, [67% of global corporations](#) significantly increased their focus on recruitment operations to establish and grow their post-pandemic strategies.

This makes sense. Talent Ops, also known as RecOps, first emerged as a result of powerful new technologies that brought data to the recruiting function. Rather than scaling by hiring more sourcers and recruiters (which means doing more of the same work, just with more people), orgs that brought on Talent Ops functions expanded the capacity of what was already *there* by using those new technologies to design process improvements, streamline and scale strategies, and optimize outcomes—all in the name of helping their respective recruiting teams become more efficient and effective.



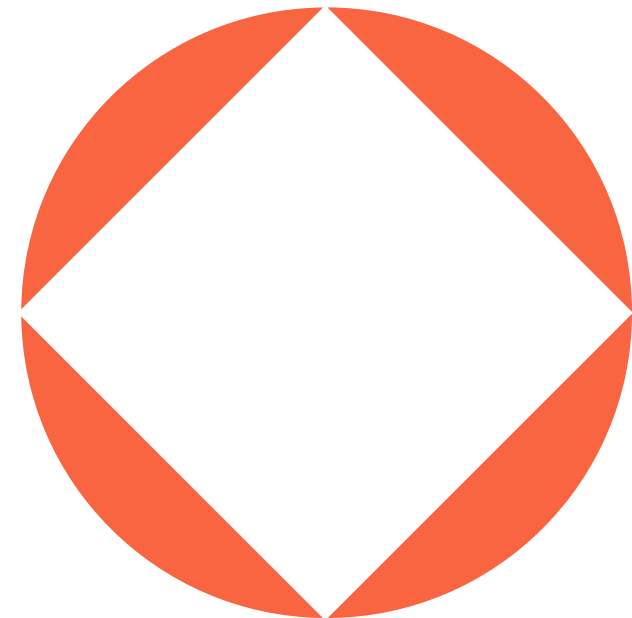


Of course, “Talent Ops” exists *regardless* of whether a team has a dedicated role in place. It’s what happens when the most dedicated ICs make the day-to-day of hiring *better* by identifying bottlenecks and making incremental process improvements through data-driven decisions. But ICs can’t run at full capacity if they’re focusing on the operational side. And your team ultimately needs a single function with a birds-eye view: one anyone in the org can go to to understand their role in the candidate journey, what technologies or processes will allow them to perform better, and what data should drive their hiring decisions.

Talent Ops is an emerging and evolving function that’s still being defined, and “how to do it” varies by org. But its purpose is clear: to give talent acquisition teams every competitive advantage possible in the battle for talent by creating best-in class processes and programs, eliminating inefficiencies, ensuring a unified approach and a consistent (and consistently great) experience for everyone involved in the hiring process.

In the following, we both lay out the fundamentals and dig into the details of recruiting operations: what it is, why it’s so critical to a modern and sophisticated TA function, the scope of its responsibilities, what its KPIs look like, and first steps for breaking into the role. We’ve also spoken with Talent Ops professionals at FullStory, DoorDash, Bain & Company and more, to get you insights into how their orgs are thinking about the RecOps function, their journeys to their respective roles, and what they’ve learned along the way.

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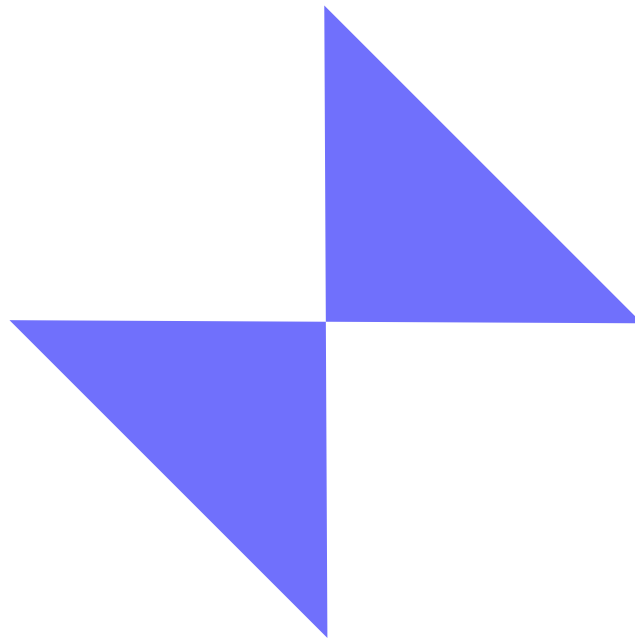
What Is Talent Operations?

The goal of RecOps is ultimately to create, optimize, and “own” the best possible infrastructure—processes, people, technologies, systems, best practices, and behaviors—to reduce friction wherever it shows up in the recruiting and hiring process, so the rest of the team can do their jobs from within a well-oiled engine.

Talent operations is the function (team members, activities, and processes) that allows the talent acquisition org to work most efficiently and effectively, meet its hiring goals and objectives, deliver consistent outcomes, and create new value for the business. The word “operations” can make the role feel overly-tactical; so you might think of it instead as recruiting *enablement*.

The goal of RecOps is ultimately to create, optimize, and “own” the best possible infrastructure—processes, people, technologies, systems, best practices, and behaviors—to reduce friction wherever it shows up in the recruiting and hiring process, so the rest of the team can do their jobs from within a well-oiled engine. Sourcers can find the best talent, recruiters can create great candidate experiences and be true partners to their hiring managers, coordinators can keep things on schedule, and so on—all because Ops is in the background, tending to that infrastructure.

But beyond inefficiency-discovery, resource-optimization, and cost savings, a great Talent Ops function also identifies opportunities for growth and uncovers ways to innovate and create unique value, while keeping the broader goals of the business in mind. RecOps serves as a bridge between recruitment and leadership. And it does *all* this through the analysis of data. (Sometimes this means first putting the technologies in place to *collect* that data.) It's through data that RecOps uncovers best systems and tools, accesses actionable insights, and builds business cases for resources and new solutions that they can communicate with the leadership team.



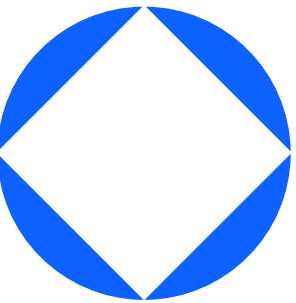
Why Is Talent Ops so critical to a modern TA function?



Because the goals of Talent Ops include uncovering new efficiencies, automating workflows, and telling the story of recruiting back to the business—all while allowing the TA team to focus on its craft—it comes with a great number of benefits. It might seem to your CFO that “RecOps” sounds like a catchall role for the activities they’re *already* paying a recruiting leader to do. But consider how much time your recruiting manager is spending cobbling together reports to share back to the business. Consider what’s on the plate of your ICs—events, campus initiatives, job boards, sourcing and nurture campaigns, and employer branding—*while* balancing their current req load.

Neither of these roles has the bandwidth to fix the airplane while it’s in the air, because it’s busy in the pilot seat. By bringing in someone whose role is to problem-solve, improve, and innovate “behind the scenes” through data, RecOps offers these benefits:

- Creating strategies that ensure the best allocation of recruiting resources—*without* putting those resources on pause to figure it out
- Arming the team with proactive information—for example, through funnel models that provide predictability and the capacity to forecast (and therefore to better-resource). How many candidates do you need at each stage of the funnel in order to hit your hiring targets? What’s the org’s propensity to hire based on things like talent market competitiveness, skill availability, and comp data?
- Improving recruiting and hiring efficiency through process improvements, streamlined funnels, and digital transformation—which means shorter time-to-fill, reduced cost-per-hire, and improved candidate and hiring manager experience. Streamlined processes *also* mean you’ll attract and hire higher-quality talent.
- De-siloing data and information so it’s all in one place, leading to improved communication among hiring team members, and between talent acquisition and the broader business
- Unlocking the full potential—and therefore seeing the full ROI—of all recruiting tools and technologies
- Bringing the right analytical frameworks in order to quickly identify the root causes of issues (or proactively prevent them), along with a general data-forward approach that combines insights about the talent market with team-specific intelligence to discover best approaches, and know where to cut and where to invest for growth



A conversation with Chelsea Cohen

Manager of Recruiting Ops



What was your journey to Talent Operations?

Landing in a recruiting operations role was like coming home: every role I had prior to Ops prepared me for it. I was a recruiting coordinator. Then I was a full-cycle recruiter; and my first big project was to run an efficiency audit for our entire team. Then I transitioned into university recruiting at Google, but later got involved with program management. From there I ran my own recruiting business; and what lit me up most in that role was setting up our ATS and CRM, automating workflows, ensuring our tools talked to each other. FullStory was one of my last clients. I was helping them with tech sourcing, but they didn't have the infrastructure in place to run an efficient sourcing effort. So I took on the infrastructure project; and I enjoyed the project and the people so much that I stayed. And I appreciated FullStory's decision to create an Ops function at such an early stage. It was a proactive decision that meant there'd be much less cleanup down the line.

We recently created a shared service, along with a streamlined workflow, for recruiters to submit a request to get a job description posted. That's being a force-multiplier for the rest of the team.

So you were FullStory's first Ops hire. What did you prioritize when you came on?

Infrastructure was initially my priority. As we grew, we needed to be able to answer questions like how many interviews we conducted last month, or what percent of our candidates came from sourced efforts versus LinkedIn job posts. Infrastructure, process, and data integrity would enable us to answer those questions. So I dug into our ATS: what was the range of its capabilities? Were we using it to its fullest extent; and what did we need to customize so we could answer our most pressing questions? I did the same thing with LinkedIn Recruiter, then with Gem. For pain points *after* that, there's a discoverability phase that needs to happen, a story you need to create with the data you have in order to discover a new workflow or solution.

Can you give us an example of a process you've helped optimize?

We recently created a shared service for job description posting. It used to be up to individual recruiters to post their jobs to our careers page and elsewhere. But our JDs started looking less and less standardized, and the whole process was time-

consuming. So we created a shared service, along with a streamlined workflow for recruiters to submit a request to get a JD posted. *That's* being a force-multiplier for the rest of the team: taking the task off recruiters' plates and freeing up their time to focus on strategy. Now I'm onto optimizing our referral program and converting our offer workflow into a shared service.

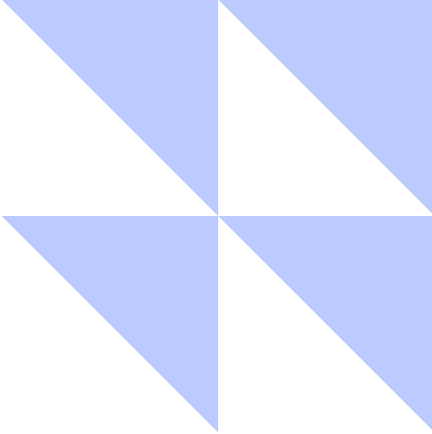
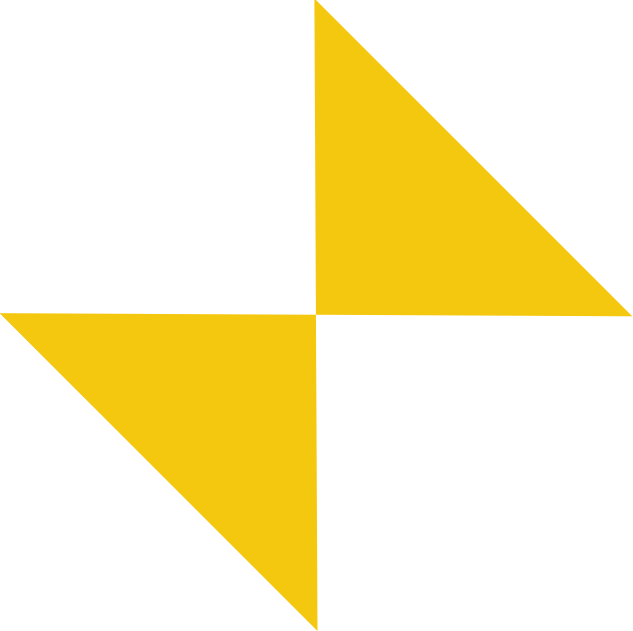
What do you love most about RecOps?

Every day is different! The full-cycle recruiter role is strategic but also fairly cyclical in nature, but I thrive on variety. In RecOps, you might proactively put something in place, and it breaks six months later because the company is growing so fast. And then you have to figure out the next iteration. It's ever-evolving, and you're looking for solutions that no one at the org has figured out before. So when I think about the most important attributes for someone in this role, agility and love for variety are two of them.

Another is that every RecOps person I know is an efficiency maven. We like automation; we like efficiency; we like productivity. But we also have high empathy, and that's where the candidate and stakeholder experience comes in. I think

A CONVERSATION WITH CHELSEA COHEN, CONTINUED

that's the real magic for an Ops person: pairing logic with thoughtfulness. It's not just process for process' sake. It's process that induces positive feelings in our candidates, our recruiters, and our interviewers. That combination of process and empathy informs almost everything I'm attending to in my role.



What Ops “owns”: responsibilities

- Tools and systems management
- Recruiter enablement and training
- Process improvement
- Recruiting strategy
- Programs
- Data and analytics
- Stakeholder management

Because RecOps entails so many elements, it's sometimes easier to break it down by responsibility than it is by role. There are probably a few different ways to slice it; but here are some buckets into which Ops' responsibilities fall:

Tools and systems management

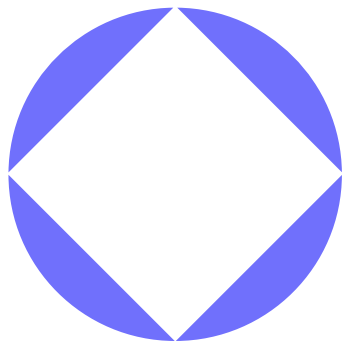
This includes the tools themselves (sourcing tools, ATS, CRM, recruitment marketing software, career site, etc), integrations, implementation, change management, and maintaining vendor relationships. It also includes the “help desk” side of things: how do you ensure that sourcers and recruiters know best practices for using the tools available to them, so you can maximize ROI?

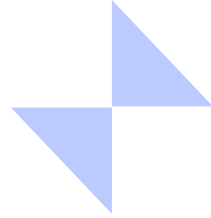
“Managing the tech stack” means not only pushing usage and championing the tools that are *currently* in place (assuming they're the optimal ones); but also having an ear to the ground to identify *new* tools and tech that can automate tasks and otherwise optimize your existing operations.

What novel solutions are on the market that speak to your current pain points? How do you design and architect a tech-stack ecosystem, and a single source of truth, so that your team has the most effective solutions with which to approach the recruiting and hiring process?

Enablement and training through the entire recruiter lifecycle

This includes creating and implementing onboarding and training sessions for hiring teams on everything from unconscious bias, to best interview practices, to preserving employer brand in conversations with candidates, to how to give feedback and where to track it. It includes documenting and regularly updating best practices and process improvements in a shared knowledge base, so recruiters have all the resources they need for the questions that might arise. It includes education and training on new tools: building out a tandem documentation with vendors and then offering training sessions with tips, tricks, and best practices for that tool.





Each of the many micro-processes in recruiting has a “most efficient” procedure; and it’s up to Talent Ops to routinely map current processes, uncover bottlenecks, investigate the reasons behind those inefficiencies, and refine or redesign them for quality and efficiency.

The point is to be a resource, and to make resources *available*, for both new TA hires and anyone on the broader team who touches recruiting: how can they communicate and interact with you most efficiently?

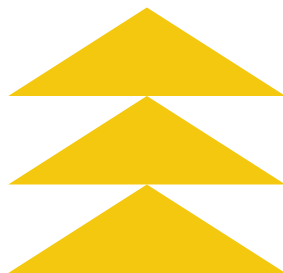
Process improvement

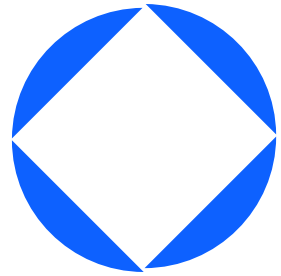
There are many micro-processes in any given recruiting function: the process of opening a job, the process of nurturing passive candidates, the process of sending in an onsite request, the process of scheduling an interview, the process of approving an offer, the process of rejecting a candidate, the process through which employees make referrals. Each of these has a “most efficient” procedure; and it’s up to Talent Ops to routinely map current processes, uncover bottlenecks, investigate the reasons *behind* those inefficiencies, and refine or redesign them for quality and efficiency.

Sometimes this means creating process around things that there aren’t even processes *for yet*. (*Then*, of course, it’s up to Ops to standardize that new process in documentation. This way your candidates and hiring managers will all have the same experiences and expectations, regardless of role, department, or geo.)

Recruiting strategy

A skilled RecOps person takes a number of critical variables—market trends and conditions, business plans and growth targets, company culture—to architect a comprehensive talent acquisition strategy. What is the business striving to achieve—this quarter, this year, over the next three years? How can talent acquisition best support those goals? And how will the strategies that solve for that question be executed and measured at scale, *while* delivering exceptional candidate experiences?





For Ops, “data and analytics” includes working with team members to ensure they’re inputting data effectively, and coaching recruiting managers and talent leaders on how to speak to the data themselves.

Programs

What “programs” involves will vary depending on the size of the org; but it could include everything from university/campus recruiting, to talent branding, to early career internship programs, to employee referral programs, to diversity programs, to career fairs, to events broadly speaking, to international growth. Talent Ops develops and implements new programs; manages and tracks the activities, milestones, and deliverables in them; and improves upon them through data-driven decisions.

Data and analytics

Of course, there’s no doing *any* of the above without data, which is the foundation of all-things-Ops. RecOps is aware of all the data that flows both in and out of the recruiting org. They build out tech ecosystems that *collect* that data and serve as sources of truth. They know *which* roles need access to *what* data, and in what format: minute-to-minute dashboards, periodic report shares, summarized insights versus raw data, and so on. They know how to use data to set up KPIs and OKRs; they build out dashboards to track performance *against* those KPIs; and they use that data to communicate the most relevant insights to leadership. Your Head of Talent needs different data than your VP of Finance does; RecOps knows what to communicate to each stakeholder.

“Data” also includes things like market data, the ROI of your recruiting tech or your staffing partners, and future-facing insights: forecasting to help the team plan more effectively. It also means working with team members to ensure they’re *inputting* data effectively (since without data integrity, Talent Ops can’t report and forecast effectively), and coaching recruiting managers and talent leaders on how to speak to the data themselves.

Stakeholder management

Talent Ops interfaces with stakeholders across the business; and the capacity to context-switch and speak the language of each stakeholder is critical. You’ll be working with Finance on comp, recruiting capacity models, and headcount planning; and working with Legal when it comes to partnering with recruiting agencies or setting up and configuring



Ops works with Finance on comp, recruiting capacity models, and headcount planning; Legal when it comes to setting up and configuring GDPR; IT around technical roadmapping; and more. The ability to speak the language of each of these stakeholders is critical.

GDPR. You'll be in ongoing conversations with IT around technical roadmapping, the tech ecosystem, integrations, and security. You'll be meeting with HR and People Analytics around quantifying quality-of-hire and updates on people policies.

Data Science might run your dashboards and help you get the intelligence you need to tell the most powerful story about recruiting to the leadership team. Senior hiring managers should have weighted input on your process and be giving feedback when new tools are rolled out or changes are adopted. And when it comes to C-levels, you'll be translating the challenges of recruiting into the language of what they care about.

Believe it or not, this isn't a comprehensive list


Talent Ops might *also* set and manage the recruitment budget, ensure that recruiting practices and policies—as well as data management—are in compliance with international rules and regulations, survey candidates to continually optimize the candidate experience, oversee immigration and contingent workforce initiatives, undertake employer branding initiatives, and more.

Which is why the first skill set we think is critical to an effective RecOps role is the capacity to context-switch. (As one Talent Ops professional recently described it to us: "It's like living life in 30-minute increments. Each meeting could be wildly different.")

Here are the other skill sets you'll likely need to bring to the table:

An analytical mindset

In the early days of an org, RecOps professionals need to be data analysts. They need to be able to process numbers to forecast recruiting team capacity, identify opportunities to optimize current processes and drive new efficiencies, help leadership set the right goals for the recruiting org, determine the ROI of current tools and systems, and more. As the team grows, Talent Ops can lean into their peers in Data Science a bit more; but they still need to be able to speak the language. So comfort with advanced data analysis is key.



Change management is an enormous part of Talent Ops, because iterative optimization will always mean updates to tools, systems, and processes. “Influence” means the ability to evangelize the new tools or processes being put in place, and to regularly communicate why the process is there, so that full adoption is possible.

The ability to influence

Change management is an enormous part of Talent Ops, because iterative optimization will *always* mean updates to tools, systems, and processes. Humans are creatures of habit—and that includes your sourcers, recruiters, and coordinators, whom you may need to train to work differently.

Influence means the ability to evangelize the new tools or processes being put in place, and to regularly communicate *why* the process is there, so that full adoption is possible. On the other end, influencing *executives* means advising them on solutions to recruiting challenges and driving consensus there, so you have top-down support on talent-related decisions.

Systems thinking

Talent Ops professionals don't just buy and implement tools; they also design innovative ways of working and build systems and processes *within* those tools. If you're someone who looks at a workflow and thinks “surely there's a better process than that,” or looks at an objective and thinks “surely there's a better system to get there,” you've got the combined analytical-and-creative mind this role demands.

Coaching ICs

Talent Ops tracks recruiter performance and provides coaching to both *improve* performance and drive accountability. This is about more than recruiter effectiveness; it's about the recruiter (and therefore, the candidate) *experience*. After all, your team wants to hit their targets, and to thrive.





A conversation with Max Butler

Manager of global Talent Acquisition Operations

What was your journey to Talent Operations?

I went straight into agency recruiting after college, then to Google where I learned how to source. From Google I transitioned to a startup, and it was one of the best moves I've made in my career. As a startup recruiter you do everything: craft job descriptions, select and implement tech, design the interview process, go to career fairs, figure it out. It was in startups that I really pivoted to RecOps. Two years ago I decided to take everything I'd learned in the early-stage world and apply it to a more mature, stable company. Now I lead a Global Recruiting Operations team at Bain.

What's one of your priorities in your current role?

In recent years, the conversation I've most gravitated toward has been diversity: how you approach it, how you set goals and initiatives, how you track it. Bain's done a great job of talking about the makeup of our company. So my priorities as an Ops person get to be aligned with organizational values.

What kinds of questions do you have to ask in your current role that you didn't have to ask when doing RecOps at startups?

There's a learning curve when it comes to keeping a global Recruiting team connected. People don't go rogue intentionally; but you don't want your recruiters in Dallas to run a different process, or work on different systems, or house data in different places, than your recruiters in London. That's a bit more difficult to control and monitor at a global level, but it all comes back to having a standardized approach. We want to offer a positive experience for everyone involved in our hiring process, so maintaining a shared knowledge base is a core part of this role. What keeps me passionate about Ops is seeing a recruiter's eyes light up when I say, 'Well, so-and-so on this team is doing it *this* way. Here's how they were able to work around that roadblock you're at.' Ops creates and maintains the resources that feel like lifesavers to the Recruiting team.

The other thing that's happened in the shift to global is that managers have become some of my most important stakeholders. It's difficult to influence change with 30+ different recruiters. But working

closely with a single manager that has ten direct reports allows me to call out issues or observations they can then carry back to their teams. I get things done much more quickly this way.

I've seen organizations wait until they hit scale or hypergrowth to hire Talent Ops, and it's a mess to clean up. It's so hard to drive change when you're backpedaling the whole time.

What's your first priority when you step into a new RecOps role?

I talk about the four pillars of Talent Operations: data and analytics, process, tools and systems, programs. They're how I structure my approach to each new team, and how I map out what to prioritize. But stepping in *anywhere*, the first thing I always do is sit down and shadow a recruiter, a sourcer, a coordinator. A VP could tell you that something needs to be fixed ASAP; but when you sit there and watch people, sometimes you discover *that's* not as pressing a need as something that's stopping a recruiter from doing their job.

A CONVERSATION WITH MAX BUTLER, CONTINUED

You might watch a sourcer download a profile and upload it to email, then send it to the ATS. And you ask, Why'd you do that? Maybe they say that's how they were trained. And you can say, Well, you can simply click an export button and save yourself a lot of time. So shadowing the team can be more eye-opening than being told by someone who's not on the ground what needs to be done.

I've said it before, and I stand by it: if I were to build a Recruiting team tomorrow, one of the first hires I would make would be Talent Ops. I've seen

organizations wait until they hit scale or hypergrowth to hire Talent Ops, and it's a mess to clean up. It's so hard to drive change when you're backpedaling the whole time. There's something refreshing about doing things the right way from the beginning. So I truly believe you can't bring over a Talent Ops specialist soon enough.





A conversation with Viet Nguyen

Head of Customer Talent Advisory

How would you define Talent Operations?

I think about Ops by responsibility rather than by role: there's coordination; there's tools management; there's reporting. And not just reporting things that have happened, but also forecasting the future to help the team plan more effectively. One big part of that is working with the team to ensure they're inputting data routinely and accurately. That's why, for as much as Ops is an enabler, they sometimes have to play enforcer, depending on the maturity of the team. Are recruiters creating jobs correctly? Are they filling out the right fields? Are they entering source of hire consistently? Since Ops basically manages the data integrity of the team, these are the first questions to ask when coming into a role.

You've just arrived in a new RecOps role. How do you know where to start?

One of the first data points I look at is time-in-stage. Time-in-stage tells me if there are candidates that aren't being dispositioned. If candidates aren't being dispositioned, that means the culture of the team is such that they're okay with letting candidates sit, so

there's clutter in the system. So there's your starting place.

What are some of the most important KPIs for someone in an Ops role to be tracking?

One is accuracy of data. Some data points you can track against HR—are both teams showing the same number of hires?—others require you to pull more complex reports.

Another critical KPI, and a more tangible one, is time-to-fill: how can you make that timeline as short as possible? There are so many discrete actions that occur between the moment Finance greenlights you to open a role and the moment your new hire shows up for their first day of work. How quickly can the team get the job live online? How speedily can they create the job in the ATS, or button up your interview process or clarify your compensation band before you go live? How fast is the intake process; what's the turnaround time for scorecard submission and decisions? All of this can be tracked, and this is one of the more obvious ways in which Ops can be really effective.

When should an organization bring on an Ops role?

Typically it's when a company goes from series B to series C that its recruiting team has gotten large enough that it's difficult to get everyone to work within compliance. It's a particular inflection point at which things need to be fully operationalized, everything needs to run a bit tighter. And you need one dedicated person to ensure compliance.

This is also often the point at which the Head of Talent's been stretched too thin, or is in charge of things outside of their core strengths. So it makes sense to bring in that dedicated function.

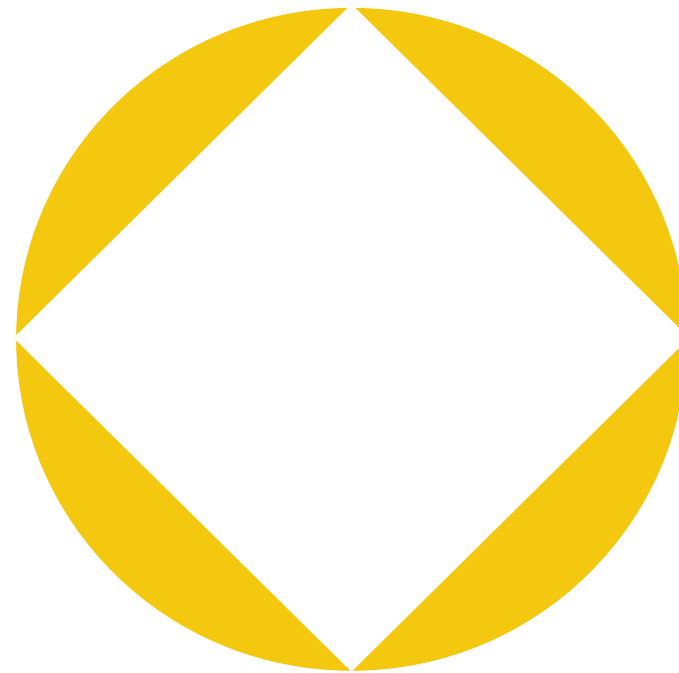
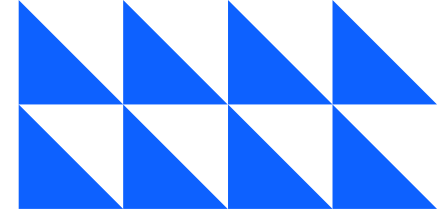
What advice would you give to, say, recruiting coordinators looking to move into RecOps roles?

I see recruiting coordinators moving up into Ops roles often; and I'd say the biggest learning curve there is influence. Coordinators tend to be very tactical, very administrative. And they don't have a lot of opportunities to

A CONVERSATION WITH VIET NGUYEN, CONTINUED

put on that strategic hat. So as they move into Ops, they need to start thinking: How do I influence other people to do the things we need to do as a business? People talk about data as an obvious skillset to pick up along the road to Ops. You can learn to analyze data. But the more important skill to develop is how to influence and motivate others to take action on that data.

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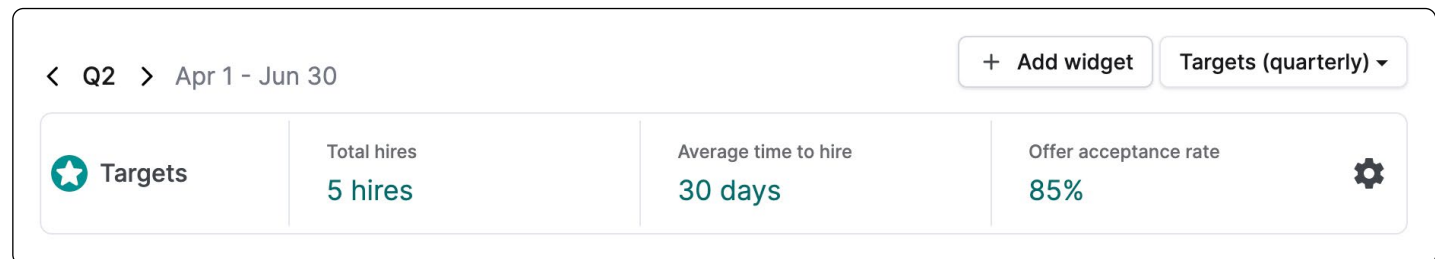


Talent Ops KPIs

As a deeply data-driven role, RecOps should be heavily focused on defining KPIs, tracking and analyzing the data that pertains to them, and maximizing them through efficiency. Granted, for brand-new Ops roles, how you measure your own impact might initially be through feedback, and/or according to whether you're checking the boxes on your own roadmap as you identify areas for improvement and begin building out project plans.

But soon enough, you'll have (or acquire) recruitment tech that provides a robust set of analytics and reporting so you can make decisions with clarity. You'll set the team's KPIs in the context of broader company goals and priorities: What are the organization's needs; what do its stakeholders want to see? You'll also set them according to the team's particular operational (in)efficiencies: what's broken and what needs improvement?

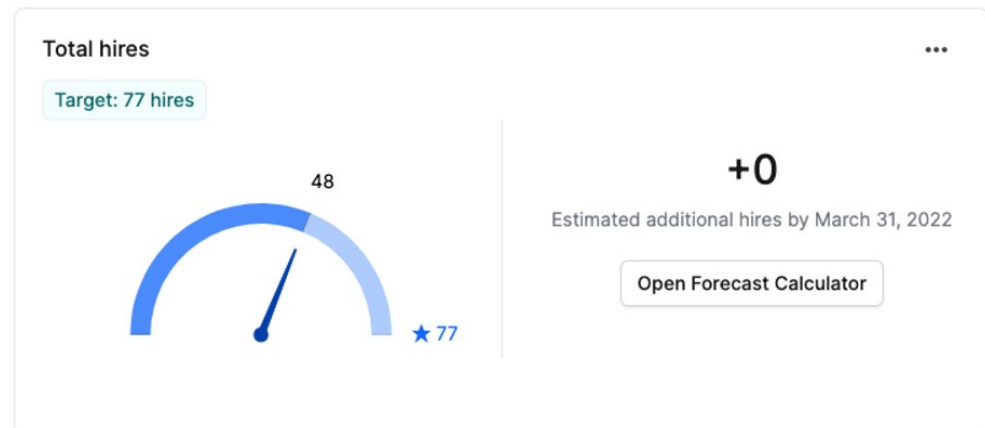
You might even set them according to industry benchmarks—something that Gem provides in-product, so teams can understand how they're stacking up against their peers.



Here's a set of metrics to include in your focus:

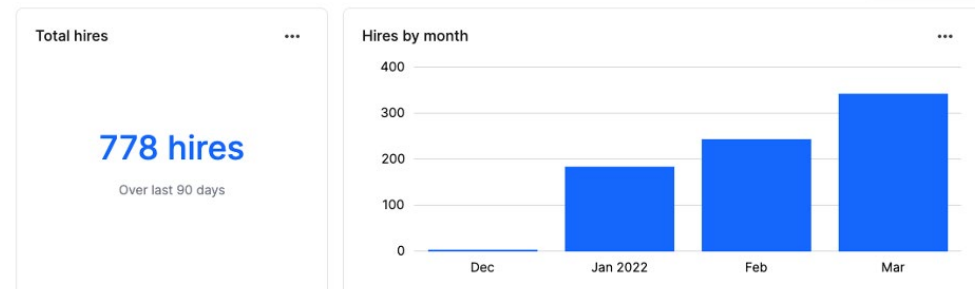
Hiring Goals

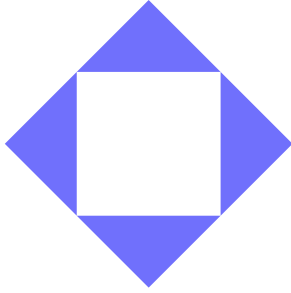
Whether or not the organization is meeting its hiring goals is the ultimate measure of its success. If the company isn't hitting its growth plan, so many other things can't happen: product doesn't get built, revenue doesn't get generated, the company mission and vision won't come to fruition. So what has talent acquisition agreed to produce based on the inputs they know to be true? And at the end of every quarter, are they meeting that agreement or not?



Dec 29, 2021 - Mar 29, 2022

Last 90 days ▾



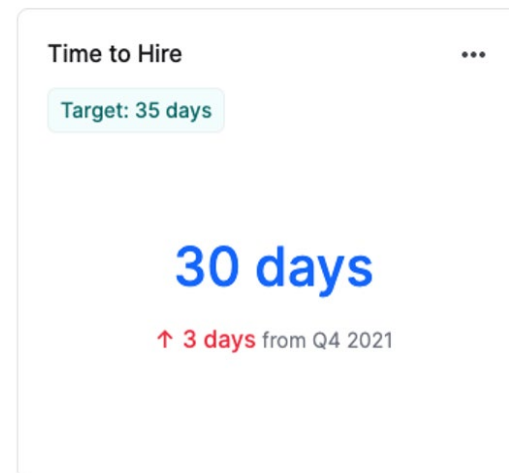


The hiring process has many moving parts: interview coordination, passthrough rates between stages, scorecard submittal, the decision itself. How quickly can you work with the recruiting team to get a job online from the moment Finance gives the green light to start hiring against a role? How speedily can you move candidates through process to make time-to-fill as short as possible?

Time to fill / Time to hire

Time to fill is the number of days between the approval of a job requisition and the day the offer is accepted by a candidate. (With time to *hire*, the clock begins the moment a candidate is entered into the ATS). The process has many moving parts: interview coordination, passthrough rates between stages, scorecard submittal, the decision itself.

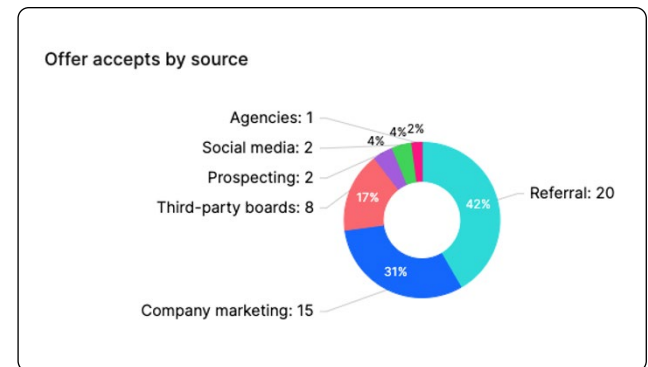
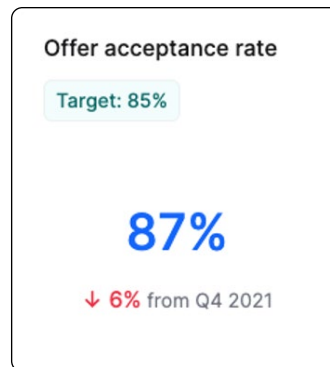
How quickly can you work with the recruiting team to get a job online from the moment Finance gives the green light to start hiring against a role? How speedily can you move candidates through process to make time-to-fill as short as possible? Naturally, this will be a metric you track over time: is your hiring funnel becoming more or less effective?

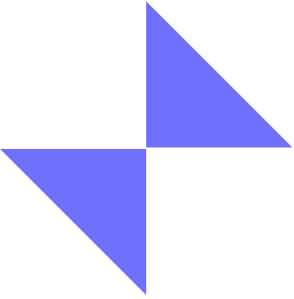




Offer acceptance rates

How many offers is your org extending, and what percentage of those offers is accepted in a given quarter? This metric will align with your recruiters' KPIs for their functional areas, which should be based on forecasts that come out of your historical hiring data. Look at OAR alongside rejection reasons to continually optimize and ensure you're closing the candidates you want to hire.





Data integrity is critical to determining everything else on this list. Is the number of hires your ATS shows the same number of hires that HR shows? Are recruiters entering offer-extends into your ATS as soon as they're extended (rather than waiting until offers are accepted to do so), so that your OAR is not artificially high? And so on.

Candidate experience

Are you constantly building a better process for candidates based on survey data and in-process feedback? Gather and track NPS scores alongside qualitative data: Did candidates feel there were enough points of contact throughout the process? Did they find the interviews engaging and appropriately challenging? Do they have a more positive impression of your brand having gone through process? Candidate experience surveys should be sent to the candidates you *reject* as well. As with so many of these other metrics, track this survey data over time.

Quality of hire

It's one thing to hit your hiring goals in a given quarter; it's another thing to ensure the folks you hired are the *right* ones... and that they're staying. Quality of hire is probably the most valuable metric when it comes to demonstrating recruiting's effectiveness and its value as a strategic business function. It's a metric you'll determine alongside HR, using some combination of data on time-to-productivity, total productivity, turnover and retention, cultural fit, employee engagement, and performance reviews and metrics.

This is a metric that only becomes measurable several months after a new hire steps into their role; and you'll measure at certain milestones—3 months in, 6 months in, and so on.

Data accuracy/integrity

This metric can be a bit harder to measure; but it's critical to determining everything else on this list. How accurate is the data you're collecting, and how accurately is the team recording actions and outcomes? Is the number of hires your ATS shows the same number of hires that HR shows? Are recruiters entering offer-extends into your ATS as soon as they're extended (rather than waiting until offers are accepted to do so), so that your OAR is not artificially high? And so on.

Data accuracy is absolutely crucial to smooth recruiting operations. Know where you're not "in integrity," and have a roadmap for getting to a more accurate view of where you stand.





What's just as important as the data you pull is its context. A 62-day time-to-fill means nothing without the context of the role, the org, the industry. And it means little without knowing, for example, that time-to-fill was 68 days last quarter.

Company time invested in recruiting

If you consider your org's overall investment in recruiting, it's about much more than what the talent acquisition team is doing: it's the amount of hours that *everyone* is investing to grow the team. If you look at the ratio of hires to the amount of time the org is spending to hire them, is that number getting more or less efficient over time? Company time is precious; and this is a quantitative number you can extract to ensure the whole organization's time is being spent most effectively as it pertains to talent acquisition.

Of course, this is a shortlist. There are other KPIs such as recruiting coordinators' SLAs (are they scheduling interviews in a timely manner?) to keep an eye on; and you may have goals around particular initiatives—for example, keeping an eye on inbound applications week-over-week alongside a talent branding initiative.

But this list is a great start. Remember that what's just as important as the data you pull is its context. A 62-day time-to-fill means nothing without the context of the role, the org, the industry. And it means little without knowing, for example, that time-to-fill was 68 days last quarter.

What's the value change over time? What *led* to that change? As soon as you include time in the equation, you have a story to tell about recruiting. And as soon as you have a story to tell, you have insights into where changes can be made.



A conversation with Annie Lee

Recruiting Strategy & Operations

What was your journey to Talent Operations?

Prior to DoorDash, I started out at VSCO as the Office Manager. At the time, VSCO had a need for recruiting coordination; so I started diving into our interview process and refining our candidate experience. As the team grew, I saw there was a need for dedicated resources to report out on what the team was working on and showcase metrics to the broader org. We also didn't have someone who was managing our LinkedIn, managing all the job boards we were on, creating partnerships with companies like Gem, etc.

The need for Recruiting Ops was clearly there. So I just started filling it: creating different dashboards, implementing different tools, managing various vendors. We partnered with a new ATS and I managed the entire implementation process from end to end. When it was time for a change, I knew I wanted to stay in Recruiting Operations and work for a larger company.

What's your priority when you first step into an Ops role?

I joined DoorDash as the team was wrapping up H2 planning and was able to gain great context for how we were planning the rest of the year. The Recruiting org has robust documentation and my first week here was really spent poring over spreadsheets—our recruiting capacity model, different trackers and dashboards. By doing this, I gained a better understanding of the thought processes that went into all of this necessary documentation. As I began to dive deeper I became more curious about why we did things a certain way and how we could make things slightly more efficient.

Documentation is such a great place to start when you're first coming into an Ops role. It's also crucial to remember that every person in the org is an expert in what they do. I leaned on my new team to understand the processes deeper, to gain insight into where the team thought the holes were, and where I could jump in and help.

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What makes someone successful in a RecOps role?

I think one of the reasons I've succeeded in Ops is that I love creating systems and processes. We're in a big hiring push right now, and I'm working closely with both our internal team and an external agency. By working with internal Recruiters and agency Recruiters, I'm able to utilize my process-driven mindset to ensure a streamlined, efficient way to work together. While we always strive to succeed, I think it's crucial to acknowledge that it's okay to fail sometimes. Projects can fail; that happens, but if I'm communicating with the right people and disseminating the right information, that's the best that anyone can do.

A conversation with Mike Joyner

Partner



What was your journey to Talent Operations?

After graduation, I worked for a large multi-national company called Nortel Networks. I was embedded in a recruiting team and working on technology projects. But while I was there, they went through several rounds of layoffs, which created opportunities all around me.

I'd already been taking on HR-type projects around performance and talent management; but suddenly I was at the hip of this leader who was supporting a global organization. And everything he was working on—benefits, compensation, board-level preparation—I was getting exposure to. It got me super excited about the people space and the impact I could have. So when Apple reached out to me for a very specialized role—building the infrastructure to scale its hiring without sacrificing quality—it was an opportunity to go deep. And it was a dream opportunity to combine my love for design and technology. I'd say that was my first real Recruiting Operations role.

What makes someone successful in a RecOps role?

One thing I love about RecOps is it takes a mind that's both analytical and creative. In the early days, you're basically an analyst: How do you dig into the health of the recruiting process? What do you need to forecast in terms of company growth or recruiting team capacity? You need the mind of an engineer to design and architect an ecosystem of tools to drive efficiency. You need to speak the language of IT and engineering teams to talk integrations and vulnerabilities and technical trade-offs. At Apple, I was actually building applications from the ground up for recruiting.

But there's also a creative marketing mindset you've got to pair with that. Talent brand is the most efficient thing you can possibly do for recruiting; because if people have heard what it's like to work

In the early days of a RecOps role, you're basically an analyst: How do you dig into the health of the recruiting process? What do you need to forecast in terms of company growth or recruiting team capacity?

for your org and they're already opting in, you're winning. So you have to be good at helping craft the company's pitch and value proposition. And then repeatedly drum the beat of employee stories to bring them to life.

Can you give us an example of one of the many "Ops hats" you've had to wear?

In my first week at Pinterest, I learned we'd signed up to go to Grace Hopper, which was three weeks away. They didn't know who they were going to send. They didn't have any marketing or brand assets. So there I was, working with a brand designer, creating a booth, crafting a dinner invite, setting the menu, booking rooms and travel itineraries. Sometimes Ops is an event planner; sometimes it's an engineer. If the hat is there, you wear it. Especially in the early days when you're a team of one.

A CONVERSATION WITH MIKE JOYNER, CONTINUED

What's your advice for folks looking to step into an Ops role?

The first thing is to be curious, and just get in there and be useful. What's the most pressing need when you arrive? I wasn't expecting to be an event planner in my first week at Pinterest, but it was right in front of us. When I joined Facebook, the company was in a hypergrowth phase, on a steep ramp operationally to be IPO-ready, and had just kicked off a project for a custom ATS. So I was immediately doing deep analytics to understand the health of the recruiting process, impact of necessary controls to be public-company ready, and learning how to represent a decision I hadn't even made around the ATS. At Apple, the team I joined was still in the administrative services game. Its reputation across the rest of the recruiting org wasn't very high. So my first job *there* was to bring some level of credibility before even digging into the real work.

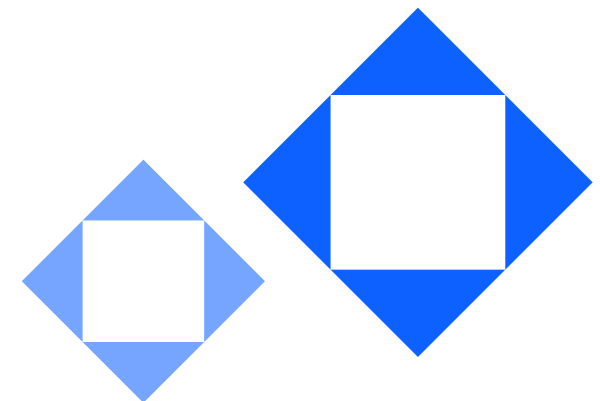
The *second* piece of advice is to understand the context and organizational inertia. I'm very familiar with products like Gem and Greenhouse, and they're

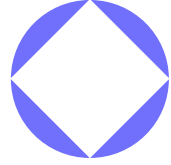
solutions I often carry with me. But if I walk in and see that the team uses Beamery and Lever, and I immediately respond, 'Why are you using this?' I'm lost. Because I don't yet understand the business or why those decisions were made. I don't yet understand what might have driven the team to that decision. So understand motivation and context.

For ICs wanting to break into an ops role I'd say: just do it. You don't need the job title to do it. There's opportunity everywhere. Granted, it might mean putting in time after your sourcing or interviewing hours. But that's part of learning and growth.

For ICs wanting to break into an ops role I'd say: just do it. You don't need the job title to do it. There's opportunity everywhere. Granted, it might mean putting in time after your sourcing or interviewing hours. But that's part of learning and growth.

Three things will happen if you just observe what the team needs and start digging in. One is you'll figure out pretty quickly if you love it or not. Two, people will really appreciate that you're helping. And three, it'll make you more valuable to the team. You'll become the person folks come to when they need help problem-solving. And that's one of the most important characteristics for someone in an Ops role: to play that trusted advisor within the talent space.





Opening/stepping into the role

Some signals that it's time to open a RecOps role:

- Sourcing and recruiting are doing their jobs while trying to uphold systems and processes for their teams
- Your Head of Talent is starting to lose the bandwidth or capacity for change management, or to lead changes through to completion
- Operational inefficiencies might soon affect candidate experience
- There's a demand from the business for TA to be more accurate in how it's reporting and forecasting

One (very compelling) theory is that it's *never too soon* to put a Talent Ops role in place. If you hope to scale a team smoothly from the beginning, you want the right infrastructure, the most efficient workflows, and the strongest data practices in place from square one.


But if your team is already in growth mode, pay attention. You'll know it's time to open a RecOps role because sourcing and recruiting are doing their jobs *while* trying to uphold systems and processes for their teams. You'll know because your Head of Talent is starting to lose the bandwidth or capacity for change management, or to lead certain changes through to completion. You'll know because it looks like operational inefficiencies might soon affect candidate experience. You'll know because there's a demand from the business for TA to be more accurate in how it's reporting and forecasting. Things need to run tighter or be more compliant as you grow. Don't wait for these signals to become glaring warning signs. It's time to go to Finance about opening headcount.

When it comes to *filling* an Ops role, there can be something invaluable about having had experience as a recruiter or a recruiting coordinator. These folks arrive with experience and insights into recruiting tools and processes. They can see where systems are broken and how they can be improved. They'll have empathy for ICs (whose shoes they were once in) and build credibility quickly. And it's possible they've *already* been taking on RecOps-like projects beyond the scope of their roles.

Many talent teams *do* in fact promote RCs and others within their own ranks to Ops—finding ICs with predilections for data and great communication skills, and training them on the more analytical aspects of the job. Another option is to find someone with an analytical background—project management, ops roles in other industries, business research analysts—and teach them about the recruiting industry. *These* folks already know how to tell stories through data; and can translate that into recruiting as soon as they know the space.

Whether you're stepping into an official role for the first time or you're interested in dipping your toe into Ops from elsewhere in the recruiting org, here are some places to start:





What tools is the team already paying for? What's being leveraged and what's not? What is each of your current tools capable of; and are you leveraging its capabilities for the greatest possible ROI? What data-driven questions can each tool answer? The point is to optimize the impact of whatever solutions are already in place before you go looking for new tech.

Documentation

If documentation is already in place, begin *there*. What processes have been standardized; what workflows have been determined; what was the thinking behind them? This is where your team goes when they have questions, so it's critical to know what information and resources they have access to.

As you read, questions may come up about why the team does things a certain way; note them and ask. If you observe where there might be inefficiencies, do the same. Are there workflows that can be automated? Have you seen processes at other orgs or on other teams (or can you imagine them) that might be useful *here*?

Current tech

Audit the infrastructure you already *have*. What's the team paying for? What's being leveraged and what's not? Look over your contracts: how many seats are you paying for for each solution, and how many of them are being used? What's the usage for those that *are* being leveraged; and why *isn't* the team using certain tools? What is each of your current tools capable of; and are you leveraging its capabilities for the greatest possible ROI? What data-driven questions can each tool answer?

The point is to optimize the impact of whatever solutions are already in place before you go looking for new tech. This may mean reigniting relationships with vendors and retraining the team. It may mean looking for redundancies in tools. You may find that the tools you've already got in place *can't* answer all of your questions or automate redundant workflows. But optimize what you *have* first... and let go of what you're not using.



Where in the funnel do candidates get stuck or drop out? Which hiring managers reject the greatest percentage of candidates? The data is there; use it to highlight inefficiencies and uncover opportunities to speed up your funnel and/or improve your candidate experience.

Shadowing ICs

We just talked about doing a deep dive into the tools already on hand; it's helpful to think about process *first* when it comes to filling in the remainder of your technical gaps. There will always be *something* that's a gap for folks on the team; and the best way to uncover those gaps is to *sit-with* and ask. Do your ICs feel they're using their time most efficiently? What are the pain points or blockers to their work?

Watch them go through their workflows and map out their processes, *including* handoffs between roles. (Where's the line drawn between coordinators and recruiters? Who owns what? Are their roles well-scoped?) How many steps does it take a recruiter to get a candidate into your ATS? How many tabs does a sourcer have open in order to do their job? Are there places where the team is duplicating work? Where pain points are consistent across the team, *these* will be your starting places for new tools and workflow solutions.

Breaking down the hiring process

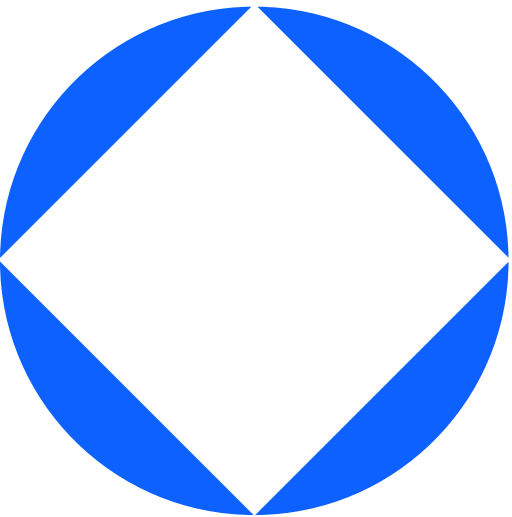
Look at each stage of your hiring process, from the top of the funnel through to close. *Define* each step and what it entails. How long does each stage—job posting, screening, scheduling interviews, making final decisions—typically take? Where in the funnel do candidates get stuck or drop out? Which interviewers are most difficult to schedule with? Which hiring managers reject the greatest percentage of candidates?

The data is *there*; use it to highlight inefficiencies and uncover opportunities to speed up your funnel and/or improve your candidate experience. Then: what technologies are out there to drive better efficiency and more conversions, and ultimately to reduce your time-to-fill and cost-per-hire? (This is one of the reasons it's crucial for Ops to stay updated on the latest tools and solutions in talent acquisition technology.)

Inquiring into data integrity

What's the current state of data integrity in your org? How is data collected and measured? This means, first and foremost, ensuring that sourcers and recruiters are inputting data where they *should* be. Some reports you can pull and compare with HR data to check for

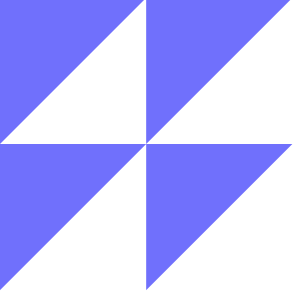
accuracy: is the total number of hires TA shows for last quarter the same number that HR shows? Are recruiters consistently entering source of hire? Are they entering offers extended as soon as they're extended, or are they waiting until offers are accepted to input them? Are candidates being dispositioned, or are they sitting in a stage even after they're no longer in consideration? Data integrity is a critical element of any strong recruiting org. *Without* it, you'll never know what needs prioritizing. So dig in and look for inaccuracies.



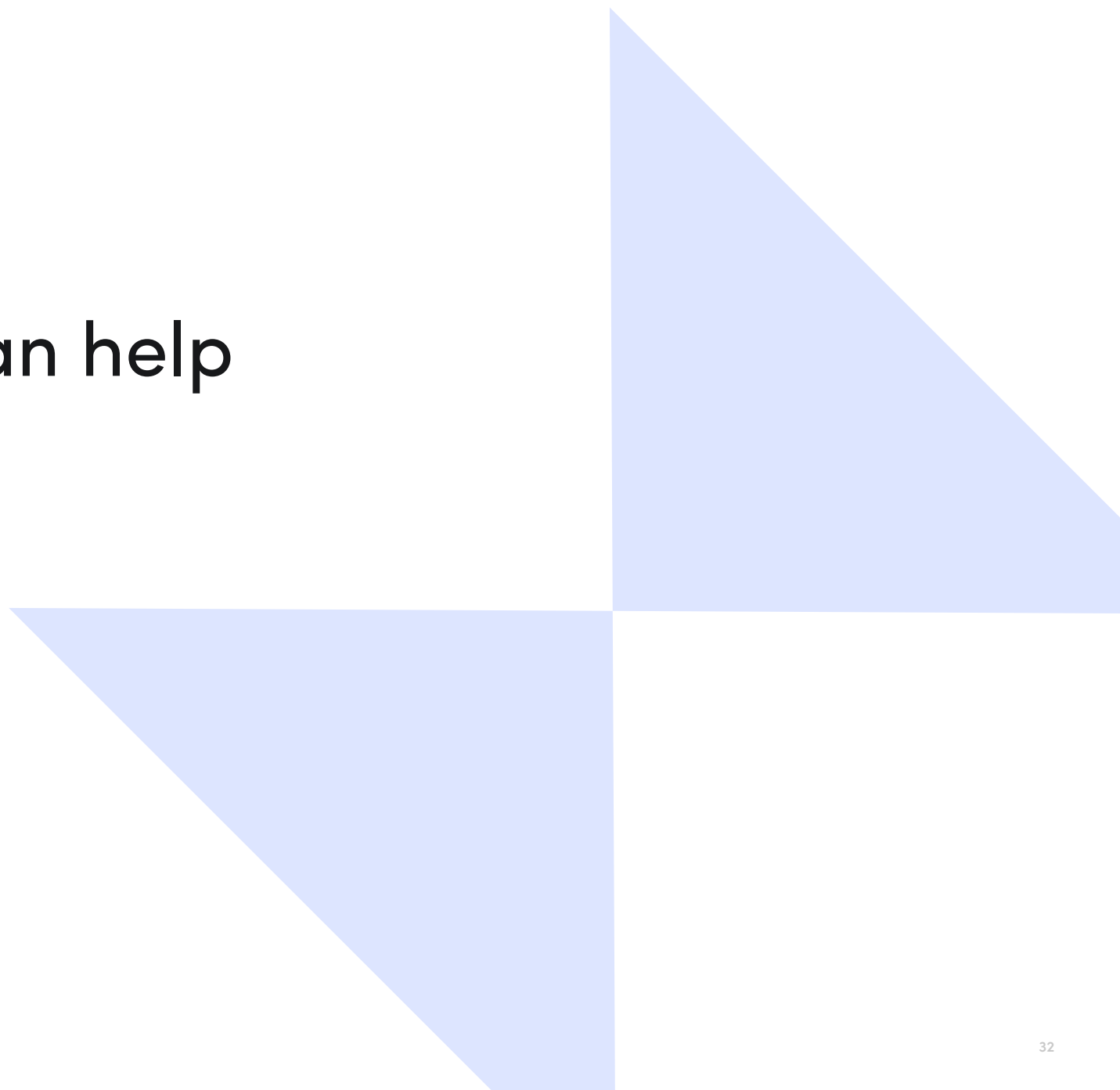
The future of Talent Ops

Talent Ops as a role is new enough that it's still vaguely-defined. And this is part of the excitement for Ops professionals right now: *you're* defining the scope of your role as it evolves, in conversation with your peers. And you get to do this while discovering the variety of ways you can offer your team a competitive advantage that wasn't available until you arrived on the scene. New technologies are here to help you collect and analyze the critical data, so you can do everything from debias your hiring funnel, to better forecast your hiring outcomes and deliver on strategic initiatives, to boost your brand in the talent market, to free sourcers and recruiters from repetitive tasks... so they can concentrate their time and energies on finding, pipelining, and nurturing precisely the right candidates for your org.

More and more, talent acquisition's impact on the success and viability of the broader business is being understood and appreciated. And with Ops at the helm of the TA ship, offering the team constant visibility into where it's succeeding and where it can be better, every talent team that brings on this role is bound to become more rigorous, more effective, and offer a sweeter candidate experience. What's more, it'll be more *pleasant*, because your sourcers and recruiters will be happy to get back to the work they want to be doing... and with the bandwidth to thrive.



How Gem can help

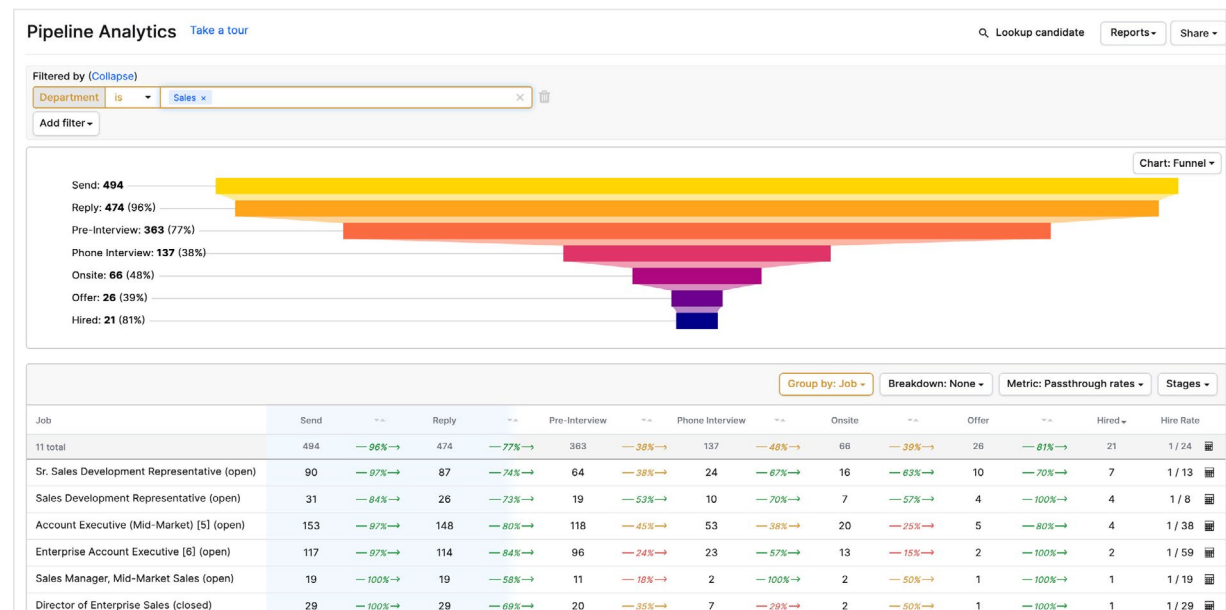


Introducing Gem's Talent Compass

End-to-End visibility

Tap into every dimension of the recruiting funnel. With access to all recruiting data from Gem and the ATS from one source of truth (without raising a support ticket), TA teams can track everything outreach to hire and identify key trends across the process. They can then slice and dice metrics the way their business thinks: by role, department, geo, demographics, and more. For example, recruiting teams can uncover outreach strategies that lead to more replies for specific roles and industries. They can also track how these candidates passthrough the funnel and spot any troubling dropoffs or bottlenecks.

At Gem, we know that the strongest recruiting teams (and therefore the strongest Ops functions) run on data. Numbers give recruiting teams an objective view of their efforts, so they can figure out where their hiring pipeline is stuck or leaky, make quick mid-quarter pivots, and see those adjusted strategies pay off. You can't build strong recruiting strategies if you don't know where to move the needle—or which needles need to be moved. That's where Gem's Talent Compass can help.



Diversity recruiting insights

Talent Compass also offers visibility and insight into how an organization recruits diverse talent, from initial outreach to eventual hire. At the top of the funnel, teams can review the progress they are making in reaching out to diverse talent. By pinpointing specific content and strategies that drive greater engagement, teams adjust their sourcing strategy towards building diverse applicant pools. With visibility into how candidates from underrepresented groups pass-through the recruiting funnel, hiring teams can uncover any disproportionate drop-offs and adjust their process accordingly.


Group by: Project ▾ Breakdown: Race/Ethnicity x Gender ▾ Metric: Passthrough rates ▾

Project	Send	Reply	Pre-Interview
202 total	5,654 (6%)	1,137 (6%)	208 (5%)
Black Women	358 (6%)	66 (6%)	10 (5%)
Black Men	288 (5%)	80 (7%)	20 (10%)
Black, Unknown gender	6 (0%)	2 (0%)	-
Hispanic/Latino Women	285 (5%)	50 (4%)	7 (3%)
Hispanic/Latino Men	266 (5%)	51 (4%)	6 (3%)
Hispanic/Latino, Unknown gender	2 (0%)	-	-
White Women	1,025 (18%)	162 (14%)	43 (21%)
White Men	937 (17%)	207 (18%)	40 (19%)
White, Unknown gender	37 (1%)	5 (0%)	1 (0%)
White Women	1,282 (23%)	218 (19%)	30 (14%)
White Men	1,145 (20%)	289 (25%)	51 (25%)
White, Unknown gender	4 (0%)	1 (0%)	-

Pipeline Forecasting

Calculator Expected hires

8 Hires
Estimated by November 8, 2022



Stage	Passthrough Rate*	Time In Stage	Active Candidates	Expected Hires
Application Creat...	8 %	8 days	494	0 (of 2) 17 days late
Pre-Interview	64 %	4 days	30	0 (of 2) 9 days late
Phone Interview	33 %	8 days	29	0 (of 2) 5 days late
Onsite	40 %	6 days	16	4
Offer	65 %	5 days	6	4
Total			575	8 hires by Nov 8

*Estimates based on historical time-in-stage and passthrough rates

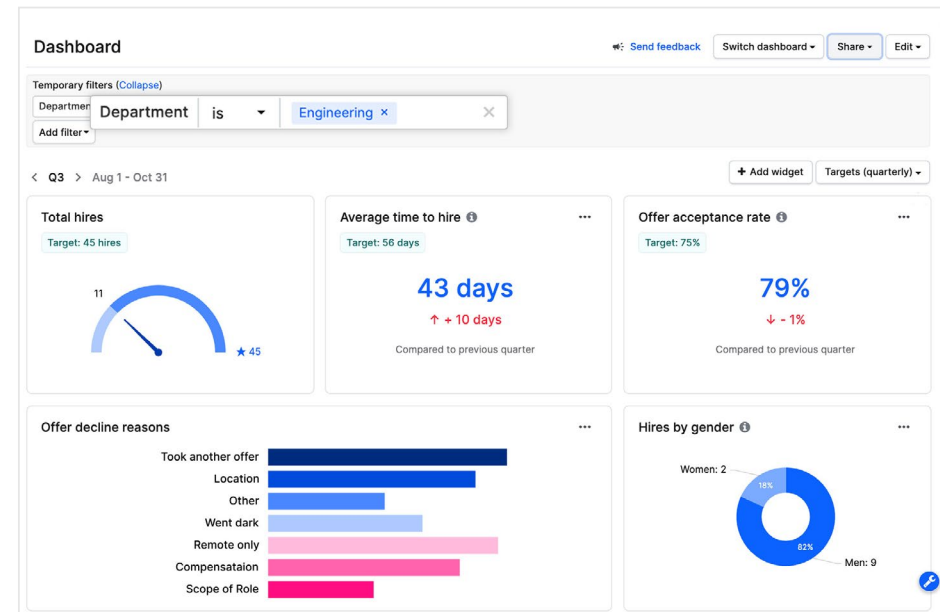
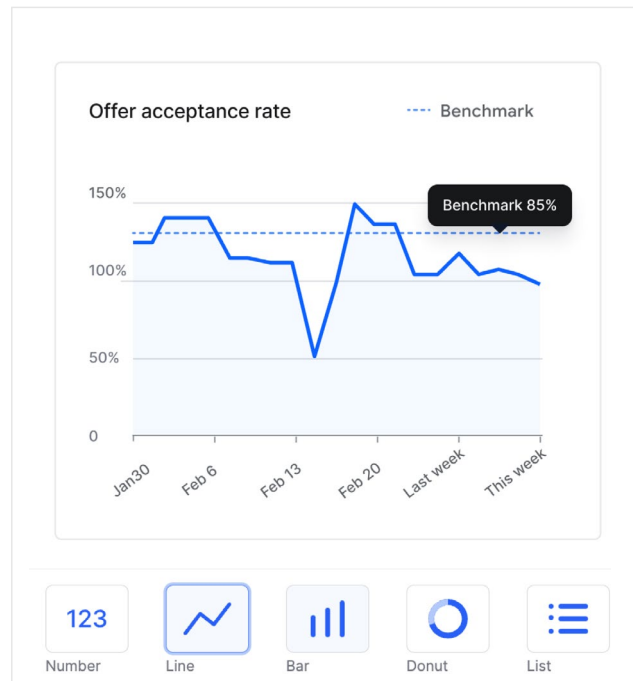
Reset all data

Forecasting & planning

Talent Compass includes a forecasting calculator that projects not only how many hires you can expect to make, but also by when. This can be forecast at the individual job req or at an aggregate level, like department. Passthrough rates and time-in-stage are based on historical data, but can be adjusted. The calculator also works backwards: users can input the final number of hires they would like to make and the calculator will output the number of candidates and applicants required at each stage in order to meet final goals.

Executive reporting

Within Talent Compass, users can launch configurable, presentation-ready reports to visualize KPIs. With easily digestible metrics on hand, talent acquisition teams can come prepared to discuss how they are progressing and where there are opportunities to improve. Reports can be customized with built-in widgets and filters, thereby surface tailored, actionable insights.



Peer benchmarks

Talent Compass also offers built-in benchmarks within the Dashboards module. Users can evaluate their team's Offer Accept Rate and Time to Hire against companies with similar profiles. Benchmarks are available across 6 different slices: company size, location, gender, race/ethnicity, department, and valuation. All told, there are >1,400 unique permutations, with each one validated by over 100 data points across 20+ companies.

Performance optimization

Within the Pipeline Analytics module, recruiting managers and leaders can monitor individuals and roles to better understand how their teams are faring. Reviewing specific job breakdowns allows managers to observe pipeline risks across roles or even spot any troubling candidate bottlenecks and/or drop-offs. Within dashboards, managers can even create widgets with specific metrics for their individual recruiters (e.g., phone screen to interview ratio, offer acceptance rate, etc.), serving as a performance scorecard.

Job	Send	Reply	Pre-Interview	Phone Interview
Total	495	474	363	137
▼ Sr. Sales Development Representative (open)	90	87	64	24
Gisela Faretta	66	64	47	19
Bella Gutkin	7	6	4	2
Bella Gutkin	1	1	1	1
Georgena Frazier	14	14	10	2
Aileen Tseng	1	1	1	-
Aileen Tseng (open)	31	26	19	10
Bruce Lang	30	25	18	9
Bruce Lang	1	1	1	1
(no recruiter set)	1	1	1	1
Market [5] (open)	153	148	118	53
Bella Gutkin	149	144	115	52
Deb Feldman	2	2	2	1
Aileen Tseng	1	1	1	-
John Evans	1	1	-	-

“[Our] talent acquisition [team] has even more credibility now because they are no longer speaking anecdotally; they’re speaking with data.”

Amber Hayes
VP of Recruiting at Unity



Gem's end-to-end modern recruiting solution empowers talent acquisition teams to engage their entire talent network, optimize sourcing efforts, and uncover actionable insights that guide smarter, forward-looking decisions. Gem works alongside LinkedIn and other places that you source, while integrating with Gmail, Outlook, and your ATS. Find the talent you need to meet hiring targets and scale your teams with Gem.

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Lauren is a content strategist with a penchant for 16th-century literature. When they're not trying to solve talent teams' pain points, they're on their yoga mat or hiking Mount Tam. Come at them with your favorite Shakespeare quote.