



A Recruiter's guide to **Application Tracking System**

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What is an Applicant Tracking System(ATTS)?

Simply put, an Application Tracking System (ATS) is a software solution that ties your whole hiring process together. Using an ATS, a recruiter can

- Source candidates for a job posting
- Track the application progress.
- Schedule interviews and track interview feedback
- Nurture a talent pool
- Make terrific offers

And a lot more, from one recruitment system.

Why do you need an ATS?

Hiring a candidate is an elaborate process. It involves many stakeholders - a recruiter, a hiring manager, multiple interviewers and a candidate. As a result, it's a time consuming and complicated. Through the hiring process, the recruiter has to not only find a candidate but also coordinate with a group of people to successfully pull off the interview and offer process. And they have to do this at scale, for many candidates, across many job postings.

This naturally gives rise to a number of problems that distill down to three distinct themes:

A lack of context

The hiring process is fragmented across a range of tools. For instance, you use your email inbox for tracking communication with candidates, spreadsheet for tracking the candidates' application progress, and receive interview feedback through internal communication tools like Slack or Hangouts. Information is in siloes, not accessible to everyone.

This leads to a lack of context which makes collaboration painful and complex. Recruiters have to spend time filling in context gaps for everyone, instead of focusing on more strategic tasks.

A transactional focus as opposed to strategic work

A huge chunk of a recruiter's time is spent on completing transactional tasks like sending out status updates, physical debriefings, checking the status of the job posting and so on. In the absence of a centralized information system, a recruiter's time is eaten up just finding and processing information, instead of acting on it.

Complex candidate experience

According to Career Builder, **60 percent of candidates** have quit an application process because it took too long.

In a candidate driven market, the only way you can stand out among the companies clamoring for their attention is with your candidate experience. It's difficult to convince candidates that your company is at the cutting edge of technology when they have to fill out an application form that cannot even parse the resume they just uploaded.

How does an ATS help with recruiting?

With ATS, application tracking no longer seems like a burden. It is like a gatekeeper that **sources** qualified and worthy candidates from a range of channels like job boards, referral portal, vendors and so on.

It is a multi-tasking tool that **manages** candidates through the hiring process. With an ATS, recruiters can email candidates, schedule interviews, collect feedback, organize resumes etc. They can also easily filter and search for candidates, and build a proper candidate database.

Additionally, they help **collaborate** with the hiring team better. Instead of fragmented communication across email, paper and in-person chats, collaboration can be online and in one place. Easily accessible to anyone who needs context.

Basically, an ATS helps the recruiter reduce time spent on transactional tasks so they can focus on strategic decisions. No one wants to spend their time sending out status updates or following people around work to debrief them about their interview. With an ATS, a recruiter can automate some part of the hiring process and focus on the important stuff: finding and hiring great candidates.

How does an ATS help the interviewers and the candidates?

With an ATS, the hiring team can:

Get complete access to candidate information.

They don't need to wait for a recruiter to forward them emails from candidates or feedback from other panel members to get the complete picture. They can just visit the candidate's profile to get a bird's eye view of the candidate's interaction with the company.

Keep themselves updated on the whole hiring process.

No need to look up the recruiter every time they want to know the status of a candidate or get a sense of the pipeline.

Refer candidates

Most full-featured ATS come complete with a referral portal. Through a referral portal, employees can refer candidates to your organization and also keep track of their referral's status.

A properly configured ATS can help candidates:

Easily apply for jobs. They can fill out a form online and just upload their resume for a recruiter's consideration.

Keep track of their status. Candidates will receive notifications when their application is accepted, rejected, archived etc. They won't be left wondering if they've tossed their resume into a void or following up endlessly with a recruiter.

So, basically, an ATS can be the best thing since sliced bread for everyone involved in the process. This brings us to our next section: who can use an ATS?

Who can use an ATS?

An ATS is one of those ubiquitous tools that basically everyone in your organization can use - much like your time-off management tool. Hiring is everyone's job, not just the HR team's, so an ATS can be beneficial to everyone involved.

Given that hiring is everyone's job, you should choose an ATS that will help everyone who works in the organization. So when you're putting together your evaluator panel, have these 4 personas in mind:

- The recruiter
- The hiring team members- Interviewers and hiring manager
- Other employees and of course,
- The candidate

How do you determine if you need an ATS?

The preconceived notions about an ATS is an endless list.

There are plenty of LinkedIn posts debating the need for a recruitment software; moaning about how an ATS renders the hiring process impersonal and unnecessarily complicates it. Resumes get lost in ATS black holes, notifications are robotic - a lot of these concerns suggest the ATS to be a death blow to the hiring experience.

Also, when you can hire people with just a well organized spreadsheet, Drive folder and inbox, why to spend hundreds of dollars on a software that needs certification to understand and hours to accommodate your process? No one really needs an ATS, right?

To this, I only have one answer:

No one really needs an ATS but it can make your life so much easier.

The Excel+Email+Drive can work, nevertheless, it is time-consuming. You need to spend pretty much all your day getting it to work. Add in the time and effort it takes to onboard another person on this system and you've just got an unscalable mess on your hands. Don't believe us? Hear it from our customer:

Melissa Baetans, HR Manager at Ultius,



In the past, we had systems collecting resumes, a complicated email filtering system, and a spreadsheet in which we manually added applicant names to track progress. Though the process worked, it was clunky and time consuming

After implementing an ATS (surprise, it's Freshteam), Ultius have it all in one system which significantly reduces manual processes and allows them to work faster. They spend less time finding all the information and more time, scanning resumes. Melissa is now able to review about 40% more resumes than she did before.

So, if you're wondering whether you need an ATS, trust us, you do.

Attributes of an ideal ATS

We'll break down the hiring process so that it's easier for you to run through the checklist:

SOURCE

All the ATS features that will help you up your sourcing game but with minimal effort.

MANAGE

The features that help you manage the hiring process and interact with both the hiring team and the candidate.

COLLABORATE

The ATS features that help make hiring a hasslefree process.

SOURCE

All the features you need to source and hire more candidates. Some of the categories depend on your hiring process - for instance, if you have an agency that handles sourcing for you, vendor management is more important than job board integrations.



Employee Referral



Website Opening



Job Boards



Social Media Search



Vendors



Candidate Database

CAREER PORTAL

A place where candidates can see a list of your open job positions and apply to them. You should be able to customise the career site so that it reflects your website's theme and your employer brand.

JOB BOARD INTEGRATIONS

This lets you post jobs across multiple third party sites. Ideally, the ATS should offer integrations with free and premium job boards.

EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PORTAL

Leverage the trust you have in your existing employees by letting them refer candidates via ATS.

SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATIONS

Let your social media followers know about the job openings in your company.

EMAIL INTEGRATION

Manage your common inbox (or personal mailbox) from your ATS. You should be able to receive and send email from your ATS

CANDIDATE DATABASE

Next time there's a job opening, look for a candidate from the existing candidate database in your ATS before throwing it open to the world.

VENDOR MANAGEMENT

Manage relationships with third-party agencies from your ATS to get the best candidate out there.

CUSTOM TRACKING

Create custom links for job posting so that you can know which channel is working best for you.

MANAGE

This section can be further divided into:

- Recruitment management
- Candidate management
- Hiring team collaboration



Recruitment management:

These features will help you reduce the effort and time spent on managing your recruitment process. For instance, an interview scorecard makes sure that all interviewers are grading on the same scale.

JOB REQUISITION AND APPROVAL

Hiring managers can raise job requisitions to let you know they want to hire someone for their team. This req can be approved by a relevant authority like your CEO or head of HR.

JOB DESCRIPTION

When posting a job, you're likely to get more qualified candidates to apply when you add a job description, describing the requirements and responsibilities of the job.

APPLICATION FORM

Get all the necessary information from your candidates with a well-designed application form. Some ATS allow you to screen applicants based on their answers.

RESUME PARSING

When an ATS parses resume to add it to a candidate's profile, it means that the data also becomes searchable. Not to mention, you can use it to filter candidates and create lists. So, if you want to pull up a list of candidates who are Photoshop experts, well, you can.

INTERVIEW SCORECARDS

A job level customisable scorecard that allows you to define what interviewers should test for, in every interview round.

CANDIDATE PIPELINE

Can you view and track candidates from one recruitment stage to another in an easy manner?

RECRUITMENT WORKFLOW

Different jobs have different kinds of hiring processes. Ideally, you should be able to tailor your job posting's process to fit your IRL hiring process.

USER PERMISSIONS

Find an ATS that will make sure that everyone on your team has the right permissions to do exactly what they have to do.

CANDIDATE SURVEYS

Send out surveys to candidates to collect their feedback, so that you can improve your interview process. If there isn't native survey support, look for a system that integrates with a third party survey service to send out candidate surveys.

EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

The ATS ensures to notify all the hiring process stakeholders when important events happen - an interview is scheduled, feedback is submitted, a candidate turns down an offer and so on.

INTEGRATIONS

Can you connect your ATS with all of the tools you're using currently to manage your hiring process? Your testing service? Your interview service? Your HRIS? Your to-do list app? Pick an ATS that plays well with the software you use so that you don't waste time updating.

REPORTING

Measure your performance and use it to improve your hiring strategy - choose an ATS that allows you to answer all your fundamental questions like "Am I spending money in the right channels?" and "Which job posting is the hardest/easiest to fill?" etc.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULING

Choose an ATS that enables you to sync your calendar (Google Calendar, Office 365 etc.) and schedule interviews at a time that's convenient for everyone. This way, you don't have to look up every interviewer's schedules separately and pick a time.

TASK MANAGEMENT

Often enough, you'll need to create to-dos for your colleagues, whether it's about certain candidates or just the hiring process in general. Choose an ATS with an integrated task module to simplify the task management process. This way, everyone can quickly assign, pick up and work on tasks, without having to switch tabs and check a third party system.

WORKFLOW AUTOMATIONS

Recruitment process involves a lot of transactional tasks - the ideal ATS would allow you to set up rules to handle common tasks so that you can focus on more strategic activities. For example, your ATS can send out notifications when a candidate is moved from one stage to another or you could configure your ATS to automatically send out tests to new applicants. The sky's your limit.

Candidate management

Ensure that your ATS has the following features to make candidate management a breeze, thereby making your hiring process efficient.

RICH CANDIDATE PROFILES

Candidate profiles that have a complete record of the candidate's history with the company; The jobs they've applied to, emails and resume they've sent you, interview feedback and so on. A one stop shop for everything candidate.

DUPLICATE MANAGEMENT

Pick an ATS that can double check applications against candidate data and guard against repeated information. You'll thank us.

EMAIL TEMPLATES

Ensure that your ATS has customisable email templates for use cases like rejection, offer extension and so on. Maintain the tone of the email, no matter the recruiter or the job posting.

CANDIDATE STATUS UPDATES

Can the candidate, without the aid of a recruiter, independently check their status using your ATS? It's a nice-to-have feature for small businesses but for companies with hundreds of applications, this rapidly becomes a must-have.

Hiring team collaboration

The team that hires together....plays well together. A lot of the features that enable better collaboration have been covered in other sections, like candidate pipeline and rich candidate profiles, so forgive us if we repeat ourselves.

CANDIDATE RATINGS

The hiring team can rate candidates using a 5 star system or a thumbs up-thumbs down system, whatever floats your boat. This can be used to easily pick out which candidates the hiring team wants to interview.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENTS

This way, contextual discussions can be held on your ATS and not lost in whatever communication tool the organization has adopted.

MOBILE APPS

The ATS that has a mobile app for both recruiters and interviewers is an ATS that your hiring team can easily get onboard with. They can review candidate profiles, submit interview feedback, leave comments, send emails etc. on the go, without having to lug out the big ol' ball and chain every time.

HIRE

Every great hiring story ends with an offer letter. You need to make sure that your ATS spans the hiring process end-to-end and that includes an offer management module.

Here are some of the features you need to look for to make your hiring process effortless.



OFFER MANAGEMENT

By using your ATS to generate and manage offer letters, you'll collect all the data necessary to objectively examine your hiring process.

HRIS INTEGRATION

Once the candidate has been hired, you should be able to easily add them to your HRIS so that the onboarding process can kick in.

FEATURE CHECKLIST

To sum it up, here's a checklist that you need to tick off while selecting ATS for your company.

Features	Yes / No
Career portal	
Career portal customisation	
Job boards	
Sourcing partner management	
Employee referral portal	
Email support	
Social recruiting	
Job requisition and approvalJob descriptions	
Customisable application forms	
Resume parsing	
Recruitment workflow	
Candidate pipeline	
Comprehensive candidate profiles	
Duplicate management	
Email templates	
Candidate status updates	

Candidate ratings	
Public and private comments	
Workflow automations	
Email notifications	
Interview scheduling	
Calendar integrations	
Customisable interview scorecards	
Offer management	
HRIS integration	
Task management	
Assessment integrations	
Interview integrations	
Candidate surveys	
Reporting	
User permissions	
Mobile apps	

How to choose the best ATS for your business

Different businesses have different kinds of hiring processes and hence, need different software. What worked for you as a team of 10 might not necessarily be the best fit for you at 5000.

We've listed the attributes of an ideal ATS in the previous section but how do you know if the ATS you're surveying is the right one for you? Here are some questions you need to ask yourself every time you evaluate an ATS:

Evaluation Questions	Yes / No
Is the initial setup and onboarding intuitive and simple?	
Can you bring your team onboard to test it?	
Does it help you improve at least one step in your candidate experience?	
Is it easy to measure your recruitment process?	
Are third party integrations supported by the system?	
Are you able to easily reach out to support?	
Is support provided during your working hours?	
Can you easily get your data from the system?	

If the answer is “Yes” to all of these questions, you should go ahead and get that ATS.

About Freshteam

Freshteam is all about making hiring seamless, for both recruiters and candidates alike.

With our best-in-class Applicant Tracking System (ATS), you can attract great candidates, manage their profiles, track application progress, nurture a qualified talent pool and make great job offers.

In addition to the Application Tracking System, Freshteam lets you manage onboarding, organize employee database, track time-off requests and a lot more.

Don't believe us? Try Freshteam for free for 21 days and let us know how it has surprised you.



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