

2026 Recruitment Planning Worksheet

As we prepare for 2026, it's time to take a look at your recruitment marketing strategy and set the foundation for a successful year ahead. This worksheet is designed to help you reflect on past performance, benchmark against industry standards, and build a data-driven plan that aligns with your hiring goals. You can complete this exercise for all jobs or by job type.

You'll start by collecting and analyzing key internal and external metrics to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. From there, you'll define your recruitment goals, optimize your job descriptions and targeting strategies, evaluate your current tools, and plan your budget.

Whether you're focused on increasing applicant volume, improving candidate quality, or enhancing employer brand visibility, this worksheet will guide you through each step with clarity and purpose.

Let's get started — and make 2026 your most impactful recruitment year yet.

Collect and Analyze Data

Collect the following internal data from your ATS based on YTD averages:

- Cost-per-click: _____
- Cost-per-hire: _____
- Cost-per-application: _____
- Apply rate: _____

Collect the following external data from your industry (hint: you can use the [Appcast Benchmark Report](#) or [Labor Market Snapshots](#)):

- Cost-per-click: _____
- Cost-per-hire: _____
- Cost-per-application: _____
- Apply rate: _____

Based on your highest priority KPI (CPC, CPH, CPA or Apply Rate), what was your top performing channel of 2025?

- Answer: _____

What was your bottom performing channel of 2025?

- Answer: _____

Define Your Goals and Objectives

What is your primary recruitment focus for 2026? These may include:

- Higher volume of applicants ☐
- More qualified applicants ☐
- Brand recognition
- Brand improvement
- Other: _____

Define your KPIs for 2026. These may include:

- Application Conversion Rate ☐
- Time-to-Hire Goals ☐
- Candidate Experience Score (survey or feedback data) ☐
- Other: _____

List out any key barriers to meeting your goals:

- Answer: _____

Optimize Job Descriptions and Targeting

Review your 2025 job descriptions. Are they:

- Clear ☐
- Up to date ☐
- Optimized for candidate search ☐

Do your job ads include key employee value propositions such as:

- Benefits ☐
- Flexibility ☐
- Company Culture ☐
- Salary ☐

Apply to one of your most critical open jobs:

- How long did it take to complete the application: _____
- Were you able to complete the application on your mobile phone: _____

Maximize Your Existing Tools

Create a list of all recruiting tools you currently have access to:

- Tool 1: _____
- Tool 2: _____
- Tool 3: _____
- Tool 4: _____
- Tool 5: _____

Next to each tool above, note how often you use them: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, or never.

Identify any tools that are redundant:

- Notes: _____

Are there any tools that you can remove?

- Notes: _____

If you could add one tool to your workflow, what would it be?

- Notes: _____

Plan Your Budget

Do you have a current budget for 2026? If yes, list it below:

- Budget: _____

Estimated applications needed for your 2026 hire goals:

- Number of hires: _____
- Applications-per-hire benchmark: _____
- Total applications goal: _____

Review your notes above on recruitment tools. Are there any that you can:

- Remove (list cost): _____
- Add (list cost): _____

Next Steps

After completing this worksheet, compile your findings into a Word document or PowerPoint deck that you can share with your team and stakeholders. To ensure that you are aligned, schedule a meeting to review your work and gather feedback from your team.

Once the worksheet has been finalized, prioritize your next steps and assign each task to an appropriate member of your team. Outline clear timelines to ensure that you stay on track and check in regularly to gauge progress.

Remember: Recruitment planning should be revisited frequently — ideally once a quarter — to keep up with internal and external changes.

Contact us to learn more!

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