

# The 2019 Talent Acquisition Landscape



6 TRENDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

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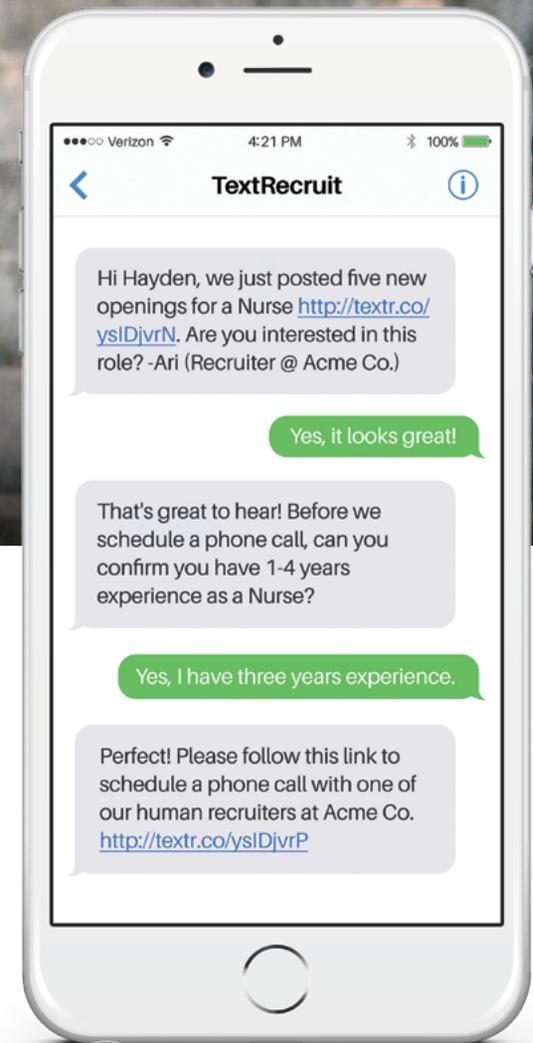
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# Welcome to the 2019 Talent Acquisition Landscape

As a business function, talent acquisition is defined by flux: Employees leave, new roles open up, and talent acquisition teams are responsible for bringing new people on board to fill the empty seats.

It should be no surprise, then, that the field of talent acquisition itself is also in a constant state of change. New technologies emerge and old ones die off. New generations of candidates flood the talent pool, bringing their own unique needs and demands to bear on employers. New kinds of roles are created as the business landscape evolves. The talent acquisition team must stay in tune with it all — every single little change — to ensure it is using the best tools and tactics to secure the best talent for the company.

Each year, talent acquisition transforms into a new ball game. As 2018 turns to 2019, talent acquisition teams must prepare for the changes already looming on the horizon.

Six trends in particular are poised to shape the talent acquisition landscape in the coming year:

## **1. Recruitment Marketing Gains Renewed**

**Prominence:** The companies best positioned to land top talent in 2019 will be those that take recruitment marketing to the next level.

## **2. Top Talent Wants a Streamlined Candidate Experience:**

Candidates feel like current recruiting processes waste much of their time. It's up to talent acquisition teams to change that.

### 3. The Rise of Messaging-First Candidate Engagement:

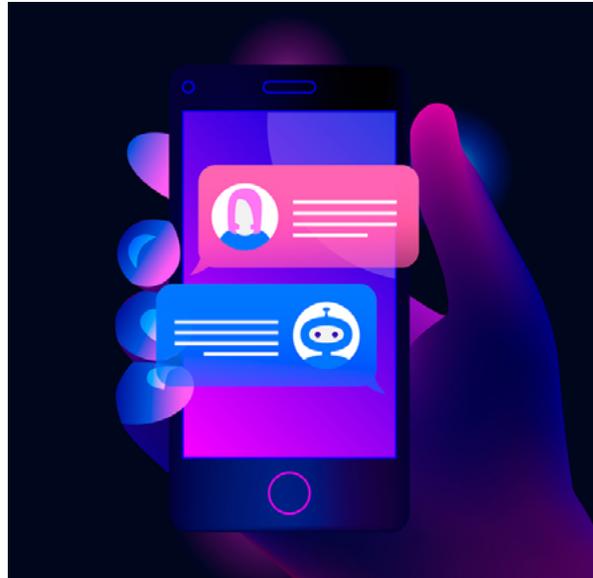
Emails and phone calls are outdated. Today's candidates choose text, chat, and messaging apps for their ease and convenience.

### 4. Candidate Outreach Gets Automated:

If you're still manually composing each message to your candidates, you're wasting unnecessary time. Let automation take care of it.

### 5. Chatbots Become the Front Line of Talent Acquisition:

As chatbots become more sophisticated and accessible, they'll become the first point of contact for candidates in the early stages of the recruiting funnel.



### 6. Talent Acquisition Leaders Take a Data-Driven Approach to Recruiting:

In 2019, a successful recruiting strategy will all come down to metrics:

How does your team perform now? How would you like it to perform in the future? What specific steps need to be taken to get from point A to point B?

In the rest of this eBook, we'll take an in-depth look at each trend to understand where it comes from and how it's likely to impact your talent acquisition team's operations.

Don't go into the next year of recruiting and hiring blind. Get out ahead of the curve today so that your competitors have to catch up with *you*.

# Welcome to the 2019 Talent Acquisition Landscape

## 1. Recruitment Marketing Gains Renewed Prominence

Simply posting job ads to the right job boards may have been enough to attract talent in the past, but the companies best positioned to land top talent in 2019 will be those that take recruitment marketing to the next level.

A key component of this next-level recruitment marketing is employer branding. Much like a consumer brand is designed to convince consumers to choose your products over

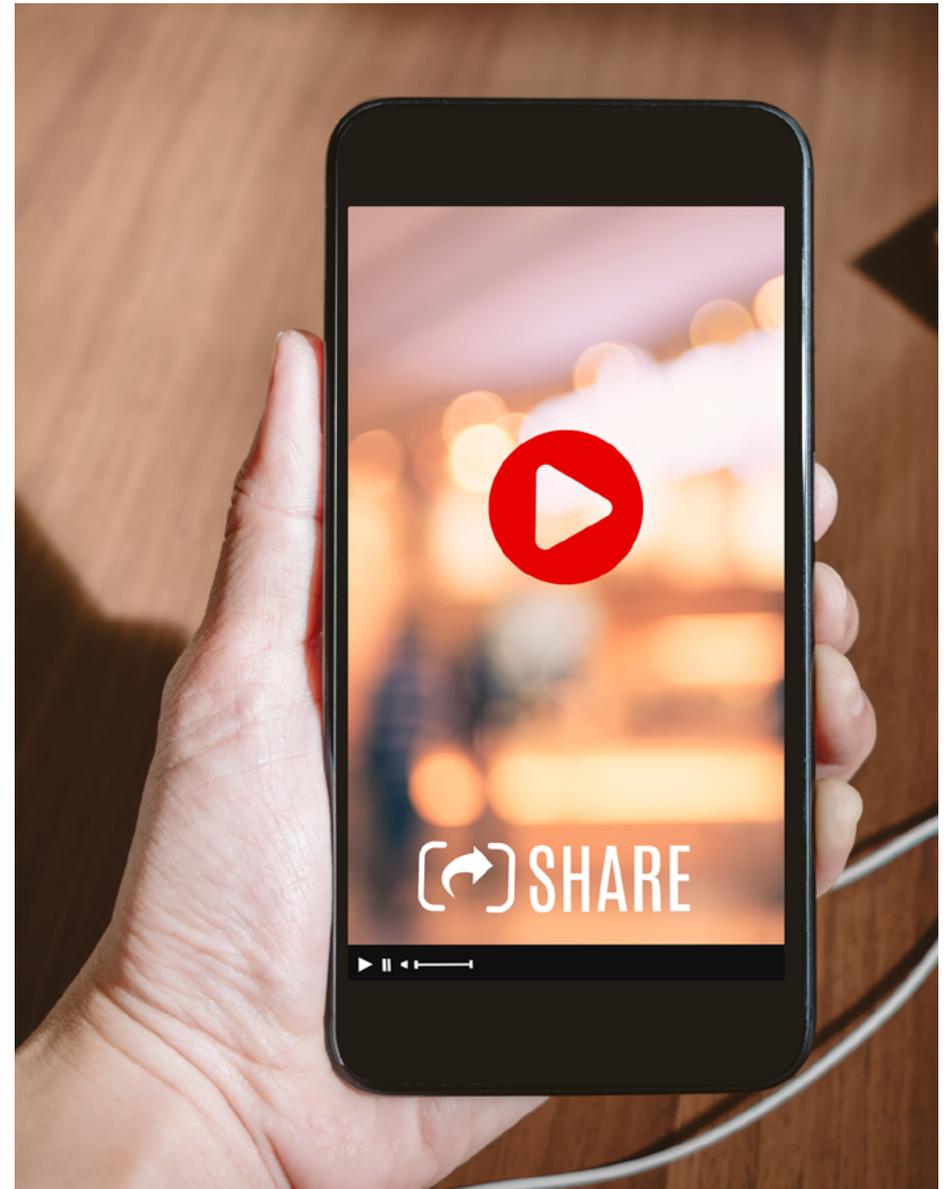
your competitors', an employer brand is meant to highlight all the reasons why candidates should work for your company instead of another.

A strong employer brand starts with a clear employer value proposition (EVP) — a short statement of all the ways in which your organization can positively contribute to employees' careers. A well-written EVP should hold the seeds of your entire employer branding campaign and inform all subsequent marketing and outreach efforts.

While your EVP establishes what you have to offer candidates, your ideal candidate personas will help you determine how to target your employer branding efforts for maximum effect. An ideal candidate persona is a document that describes what the perfect hire for a given role is like. Personality traits, work experience, skill set, behaviors, demographics — your ideal candidate personas should contain all the information your talent acquisition team needs to zero in on the right candidates. Talk with hiring managers, recruiters, and existing employees to get their input on these profiles;

their experiences in the trenches give them direct insight into what makes for a good employee in a given role.

To ensure your recruitment marketing efforts reach the right candidates, create employer branding content that candidates who fit your ideal personas will find engaging, interesting, and relevant. In 2019, more employers are likely to incorporate video content into their employer branding efforts, thanks to the ease with which video can now be created. One particularly potent tactic is creating videos that tell the stories of existing employees — their experiences at work, what they love about the job, and so on. This content can be repurposed into multiple formats, such as infographics, articles, photo essays, and more. Having a wider variety of content increases the chances you'll catch the attention of the right candidates.



As with any marketing effort, your employer branding campaign can only succeed if you get it out in front of the right people. To accomplish this, you need to meet candidates where they are — and where they are today is social media.

Social recruiting — the art of sourcing, engaging, and recruiting candidates through social media sites — is integral to recruitment marketing success. Fewer and fewer candidates are searching for work on job boards these days. If you want to tap the best talent pools, you need to bring your employer branding to social media.

LinkedIn is the professional networking site par excellence, and it should certainly play a major role in your efforts. However, it's not the only place to find candidates. Your organization should establish a presence on all the major social media sites, including Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. You never know where your next great hire might

come from. For example, talent acquisition pros used to dismiss Snapchat as an ineffective recruitment channel — until McDonalds got creative with it. By implementing “Snaplications,” the fast-food giant was able to increase applications by 35 percent and careers page traffic by 30 percent.<sup>1</sup>

In 2019, we should also expect more organizations to rely on programmatic advertising to promote open jobs and amplify employer branding content on social media and other digital platforms. In programmatic advertising, machines automatically purchase ads for you based on the performance of previous ads, your target audience, and other factors. Essentially, it's a way to use AI and machine learning to run more effective ad campaigns. As Brandon Luiszer, manager of talent acquisition at Love's Travel Stops and Country Stores, puts it,

<sup>1</sup> <https://blog.textrecruit.com/is-snapchat-an-effective-way-to-attract-talent>

“Given the extremely tight labor market, the cost of attracting great candidates is increasing. Programmatic pay-for-performance ads let you control job advertising costs and ensure you’re targeting the right audience at the right time.”<sup>2</sup>

Programmatic ads can be combined with text-message-based application processes to encourage more candidate interest. For example, the supermarket chain Dierbergs advertises text-to-apply job openings through social media, print, billboards, and Spotify ads. By getting recruitment marketing content in front of the right people and making it easy to apply, Dierbergs has significantly increased its applications.

## 2. Top Talent Wants a Streamlined Candidate Experience

When it comes to the candidate experience, most job seekers aren’t happy with what’s currently on offer. According to a survey<sup>3</sup> conducted by the



Talent Board, 26 percent of candidates feel the hiring process takes too long, while 46 percent feel their time is disrespected during interviews.

In 2019, the candidate experience will be all about streamlining. Organizations must cut out unnecessary roadblocks to make applying, interviewing, and getting hired as painless as possible.

Your company can score some quick wins by eliminating redundant interview rounds, striking irrelevant questions from applications, and making company

<sup>2</sup> <https://rallyrecruitmentmarketing.com/2018/11/why-programmatic-advertising-is-the-next-frontier-in-recruitment-marketing-rallyfwd-sneak-peek/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ideal.com/stats-candidate-experience/>

reps more accessible to candidates. For maximum convenience, you should also bring in some new tech tools.

Most companies still rely on emails, online forms, and phone calls to stay in touch with candidates and solicit application materials. Today, these clunky communication methods could easily be replaced by a live chat platform. Add live chat to your careers page, and you give candidates an easy way to contact company reps, ask questions, apply, and even schedule interviews. In a Zendesk survey<sup>4</sup>, 92 percent of consumers said they find live chat satisfying — a higher number than other communication methods. Given how much people enjoy live chat as

consumers, it stands to reason they'd enjoy it as candidates, too.

Many companies are also using live chat to help recruiters and HR reps conduct quick screening conversations, eliminating the need to schedule and carry out traditional phone screens. This is a big time-saver for both your workers and your candidates, a true win-win.

Aside from live chat, SMS is also gaining traction as a popular recruitment communication channel. There's good reason for this, as 76 percent of millennials<sup>5</sup> — the largest generation in the workforce and growing — find text messages more

convenient than other forms of communication. Plus, more and more job seekers are pursuing mobile-first job searches, and text messaging allows them to use their smartphones in their searches.

One smart way to bring text messaging to your recruiting process: Add text-to-apply short codes to your recruitment marketing materials, like job ads, tweets, Facebook posts, etc. This allows interested candidates to get the ball rolling by firing off a quick text message.

4 <https://www.zendesk.com/company/press/zendesk-benchmark-live-chat-drives-highest-customer-satisfaction/>

5 <https://www.openmarket.com/press/infographic-millennials-prefer-sms/>



### 3. The Rise of Messaging-First Candidate Engagement

Going hand in hand with employer branding and the candidate experience is candidate engagement. In 2019, talent acquisition teams really need to pay attention to using the right methods and channels to connect with candidates. Emails and phone calls were preferred in the past, but most candidates today find text messaging, live chat, and other messaging applications to be much more convenient.

Shifting to a messaging-first candidate engagement strategy is not without its obstacles. Chief among them is the problem of keep tracking of candidate communication in a centralized location. In the past, we saw many organizations adopt integrations between email clients and applicant tracking systems (ATSs) in order to organize, track, and analyze candidate engagement efforts. In 2019, as organizations adapt to messaging candidates, they'll need tools that can do the same thing for their texts, live chat clients, and Facebook messages.

A good example would be a solution like [TextRecruit](#), which allows talent acquisition and HR teams to text and chat with candidates and employees through one centralized platform. The TextRecruit platform integrates with the company's larger HR tech stack, allowing the team to track critical metrics like conversion rates, drop-off rates,

open rates, and so on. Plus, team members won't have to use their own devices to text with candidates, creating a more secure channel between company and applicant.

#### 4. Candidate Outreach Gets Automated

Every day, it seems a new automation solution comes along to take yet another time-consuming task off recruiters' plates — and no one's complaining about that. Recruiting automation has been picking up steam for several years now, and the technology will only gain more momentum in 2019.

Expect to see more organizations adopt automated interview-scheduling tools, which can shave a lot of time off the hiring process by eliminating the 15 emails<sup>6</sup> typically required to schedule a single interview manually.

Chatbots will also be a major player, thanks to their ability to conduct automated screening conversa-

tions. In the span of just a few minutes, a chatbot can assess a candidate's qualifications and either move them along in the process or politely decline their application, as appropriate. In fact, [TextRecruit's Ari](#) can screen a candidate and schedule their interview in just five minutes. By outsourcing screening functions to chatbots, you can be more confident in the quality of the candidates in your funnel without having to go through exhaustive screening calls with each and every applicant.

In 2019, a lot of repetitive recruitment communication should also be automated away. Many sales reps already rely on customer relationship management (CRM) systems that send automated follow-up messages to prospects based on changes to a prospect's status in the system. It's about time talent acquisition teams follow their lead. Look out for tech

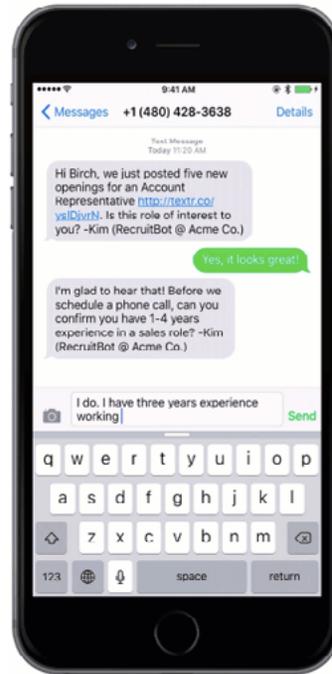
6. <https://www.recruiter.com/i/6-ways-ai-is-already-changing-hiring-process/>

tools that generate and send custom messages to candidates automatically based on changes to their status in your recruitment funnel. TextRecruit users can define certain ATS state changes that trigger text messages to candidates. So, for example, candidates who are moved to the “interview scheduled” status could be sent text messages containing directions to the office.

## 5. Chatbots Become the Front Line of Talent Acquisition

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been put to good use in resume-parsing and job-matching platforms, but as the technology grows more sophisticated, we’ll see it take on even more complex tasks. For instance, chatbots like

TextRecruit’s Ari can go way beyond keyword-based resume parsing. They can actually hold full-fledged conversations with



candidates! Expect to see more organizations integrating chatbots into their recruiting workflows in 2019 as the technology becomes more widespread and accessible.

Chatbots will supplement many of the trends we’ve already discussed here. For example, a chatbot could be integrated with the live chat client on your company’s careers site or Facebook page. Candidates could still chat directly with talent acquisition team members when needed, but chatbots could provide support for most basic questions, comments, and concerns. In this scenario, the chatbot serves as an automated FAQ, capable of answering commonly asked questions about the recruiting process, the company, and other typical candidate concerns. The chatbot can also provide recruiting support to candidates, walking them through the application, clarifying next steps, and more.

Once a candidate's application is submitted, a chatbot can also handle screening and interview-scheduling duties. The chatbot can assess whether the candidate meets the necessary criteria, gather more information to fill any resume gaps, and automatically schedule in-person interviews for those candidates who pass the screening.

Chatbots can also be used to automate outreach to candidates who have expressed interest but since gone cold. For example, if a candidate starts but does not submit an application, the bot can reach out via live chat, Facebook Messenger, or another avenue, gently nudging the candidate to finish the application and offering additional information about the recruiting process and company as needed.

The makers of chatbots are also finding ways to integrate their bots with other platforms, like text messaging. As the bots become capable of more and more integrations, they'll transform from specialized

tools to the first point of contact across an organization's entire candidate engagement effort. This frees talent acquisition team members up to focus on the strategic and creative aspects of recruiting, rather than time-intensive and repetitive tasks.

## **6. Talent Acquisition Leads Take a Data-Driven Approach to Recruiting**

Between the strategic mandates of recruitment marketing, candidate engagement, and candidate experience, plus new AI and automation tools, talent acquisition teams will have a lot to juggle in 2019. That doesn't mean a team should try to adopt any and every new idea and tool it can. As with everything in talent acquisition, teams need to take a strategic approach, utilizing the right tools and techniques at the right times.

It all comes down to metrics: How does your team perform now? How would you like it to perform in the future? What specific steps need to be taken to get from point A to point B?



In other words: Talent acquisition leads will need to take a data-driven approach to recruiting, strategically measuring hiring funnel performance to determine what's working, what isn't, and what to do about it. For this, talent acquisition leads will need high-level views of the various tools their teams are using, as well as the performance of all initiatives across marketing, engagement, and experience.

“For years the discipline of HR analytics, training analytics, or people analytics was considered a niche, backwater part of human resources,” writes Josh Bersin<sup>7</sup>. “Today, I’m happy to say, all this has changed. With the increased

focus on measuring diversity, gender pay equity, skills gaps, labor utilization, retention rates, real-time feedback, and even organizational network analysis, CEOs and CHROs now understand that people analytics is a vital part of running a high-performing company.”

Most good talent acquisition tech should come pre-equipped with reporting functions that allow you to track performance, so be sure to use them. This will allow you to track the effectiveness of each platform, as well as identify bottlenecks, gaps, opportunities for integrations, and other areas for

<sup>7</sup> <https://joshbersin.com/2017/12/people-analytics-here-with-a-vengeance/>

improvement in your current tech stack and recruitment methods.

Some important metrics to consider tracking to ensure optimal recruiting performance include:

- Number of applicants generated by each sourcing channel/recruiting initiative
- Engagement levels among candidates
- Average time spent at each stage of the recruiting process
- Conversion rates (ratio of applicants to offers, ratio of offers to acceptances)

While these metrics will offer general insight into your processes, the specific metrics you choose to focus on will depend on your organization's talent acquisition goals. What's most important is that your team adopts a data-driven approach to talent acquisition.



# 4 Ways to Prepare for 2019 Today

To quickly recap, the talent acquisition landscape in 2019 is likely to be shaped by six particular trends:

1. More targeted and strategic recruitment marketing efforts that foreground employer branding and social recruiting.

2. Streamlined candidate experiences that use live chat, text messaging, and chatbots to simplify the recruiting process from start to finish.

3. Candidate engagement strategies that treat text messaging, live chat, and other messaging apps as the primary modes of contact between candidates and recruiters.

4. Candidate outreach automation tools that keep candidates updated and in the loop with minimal effort on the part of recruiters.



5. Chatbots as the primary point of contact for candidates early in the recruiting funnel, conducting screening conversations and scheduling interviews with little recruiter intervention.

6. A data-driven approach to recruiting that leverages the advanced analytics capabilities of today's recruiting tech as a starting point for all talent acquisition decisions.

As we head into 2019, it's important that talent acquisition leaders take the appropriate steps to position their teams for success. Toward that end, there are four things you can do right now:

### **1. Educate Yourself**

Even the most experienced talent acquisition leader needs to hit the books from time to time. If you encountered any unfamiliar or unclear concepts while reading through this report, now is the time to do your research. You want to be prepared for everything that 2019 could possibly bring. Make a list of the items on which you need more information. Then, scour your favorite trusted industry publications for details. Be sure to also reach out to thought leaders and peers to see if they have any insights.

### **2. Reevaluate Your Recruiting Process**

Take a look at your current recruiting and hiring process in light of these new trends. How does your current

process align with them? Where are there gaps between the trends and your process? When you've found a gap, consider whether it needs to be closed. Not every new strategy and tool will be right for your company. It all depends on what you're trying to accomplish. If you determine the gap does need closing, start mapping your plan to do just that.

Pay close to attention to your recruitment marketing, candidate experience, and candidate engagement methods. These are the areas where we're likely to see the most change in 2019, so they're the areas that require the most scrutiny today.

### **3. Take a Look at Your Tech**

While reevaluating your processes, you'll also want to reevaluate your tech stack. Are your tech tools current? Which platforms and programs could use some updating? Will your current tech stack support the new initiatives you plan to deploy in 2019, and if not, what replacement tools

will you choose?

In light of the trends discussed in this report, there are a few tech tools you should pay particular attention to:

- Live chat: Do you have a live chat client integrated into your company careers page? If not, start shopping around for one. Check out [JobChat](#) by TextRecruit for one possible solution.
- Chatbots: If you don't yet have your eye on a chatbot, consider TextRecruit's [Ari](#) as your new recruitment front line.
- Text messaging: You can't move to a messaging-first candidate engagement strategy without software for managing that initiative. [TextRecruit](#) offers a convenient centralized platform for sending and tracking text message communication to candidates, and the [TextApply](#) solution allows candidates to apply for jobs directly via SMS.

#### 4. Start Forecasting Your 2019 Hiring Needs Now

You can't predict the future with 100 percent certainty, but you can get a good idea of the kinds of talent your company is likely to need in 2019 by considering your business strategy for the coming year. What major initiatives will the company roll out, and what kind of talent is needed to drive those initiatives? Consider also which employees are likely to leave soon, based on their tenure and their personal career goals.

Armed with this information you can create a general outline of your company's hiring needs in 2019. Then, you can determine which strategies, tactics, and tools are most likely to help meet those needs. You don't need to adopt those methods immediately, but you should be prepared to do so when the time is right. No matter what the talent acquisition landscape looks like in 2019, one thing is for certain: Those teams that move the fastest and most efficiently will be the teams that win the war for talent in the coming year.

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