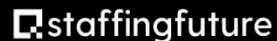




2025

STATE *of* STAFFING

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2025 STATE *of* STAFFING

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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

2025 has been unpredictable. No one knows what will happen in the short term. But one thing's certain — **smart staffing agencies are focused on the long term.** Our latest State of Staffing Benchmarking report explores how staffing firms can look beyond the here and now and position themselves for success into the future.

Key takeaways:

- Despite **27%** of agencies reporting revenue contraction in 2024, **96%** forecasted some amount of growth for 2025 and only **2%** said they're expecting contraction. However, recent economic developments, struggles to secure new clients, and slowing job orders may hinder progress.
- Fast-growth agencies differentiate themselves through technology adoption (**62%** planning new purchases) and strong referral programs (**86%** have formal programs vs. **60%** for no-growth agencies).
- AI adoption has surged to **61%** of agencies (up from **48%** in 2024), with conversational AI (**55%**) and resume parsing / database cleanup (**45%**) being the most common applications.
- Quality of hire (**31%**) has emerged as the top metric for measuring talent source ROI, ahead of cost-per-hire and time-to-fill.

Though economic uncertainties may challenge growth in the year ahead, more than half of respondents in every industry vertical are aiming to achieve growth rates of **11%** or higher.

To drive this growth, businesses are focusing on two key opportunities: implementing technology, automation, and AI (**22%**) and improving client services (**16%**).

Strategic technology investments continue to be a critical part of the road to success, but in an increasingly AI-powered world, agencies must focus on strengthening the human connections at the heart of effective staffing.



*I believe the current economic climate will present challenges to growth in 2025. However, **adversity often drives progress.** We are developing stronger sales professionals and recruiters while refining our internal processes to enhance efficiency and maintain a competitive edge.*

~ Survey response

Who Took the Survey



Who took the survey

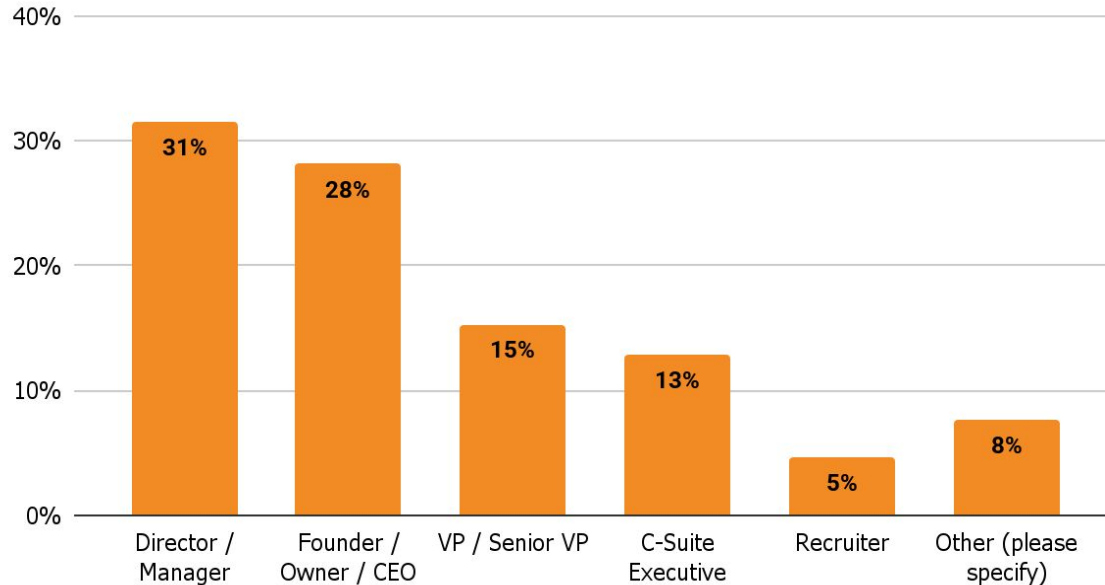
The primary State of Staffing survey was conducted in January 2025 and included questions about past and anticipated growth, business strategies, technology adoption plans, and more. Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report is based on responses from the January survey.

In April, we followed up with a brief pulse survey to find out if agencies had changed their economic outlook and adjusted their growth predictions. We've included some of the individual responses and collective sentiments from this pulse survey to provide insights on how agencies are adjusting as the year progresses.



Who took the survey

What best describes your job seniority?

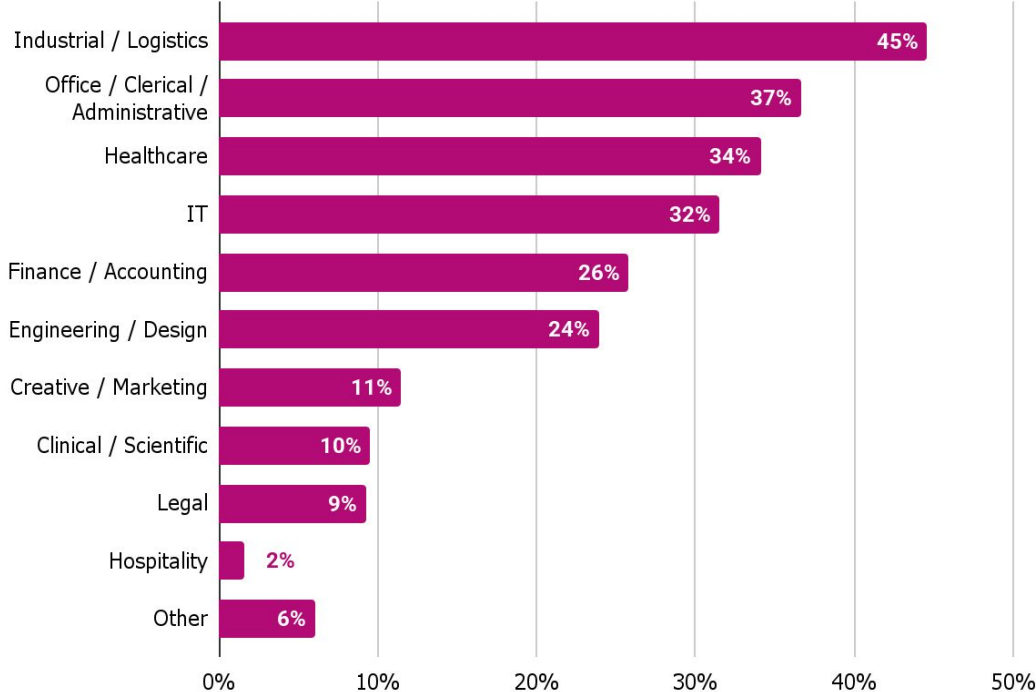


328 staffing professionals participated in this year's survey.

More than half (**56%**) were in senior leadership positions (Owner, CEO, VP, C-Suite), and **31%** were directors and managers.

Who took the survey

What best describes your staffing industry specialty?



Respondents reported serving a variety of verticals, with many specializing in:

45% Industrial / Logistics

37% Office / Clerical / Administrative

34% Healthcare

32% IT

Growth categories

Each year, we segment our data by revenue growth rate, providing actionable insights to help you accelerate the growth of your own agency:

- Fast-growth agencies reported a revenue growth rate of **21%** or more in 2024.
- Moderate-growth agencies reported a revenue growth rate between **11%** and **20%**.
- Slow-growth agencies reported a revenue growth rate between **1%** and **10%**.

Nearly three in 10 respondents (**27%**) reported that their revenue contracted in 2024.

Meanwhile, **25%** grew their revenue at a slower pace of **1-10%**, **20%** said their revenue grew by **11%-20%**, and **15%** had significant growth of **21%** or more.

In this report, you'll learn how fast-growth staffing agencies operate differently. Our goal is to give you guidance on how you can design your business to grow your agency faster.

Fast-growth agencies:

↑ **21%+**

Revenue growth rate

Moderate-growth agencies:

↑ **11-22%**

Revenue growth rate

Slow-growth agencies:

↑ **1-10%**

Revenue growth rate

The DNA of a Fast-Growth Agency

The key traits that define fast-growth staffing agencies (those with **21%+** revenue growth).

They're boosting efficiency with tech

- Fast-growth agencies are **32%** more likely to have a mobile app
- More likely to have automated compliance processes (**57%** vs. **37%** overall) and talent redeployment (**36%** vs. **23%**)
- About **one in three** plan to automate reference and background checks, reputation management, assessments, and compliance
- **62%** plan to purchase new software solutions in the next 12 months (vs. **37%** overall)

They're prioritizing the quality of hire and focus on referrals

- Fast-growth agencies are **52%** more likely to use referral software
- More likely than agencies overall to rate referrals as “extremely important” to their business (**71%** vs. **53%**)
- **86%** have formal referral programs (vs. **70%** overall and just **60%** for no-growth agencies)
- **47%** report referrals have the highest placement rate (more than any other source)

They're strategic with AI and relying less on job boards

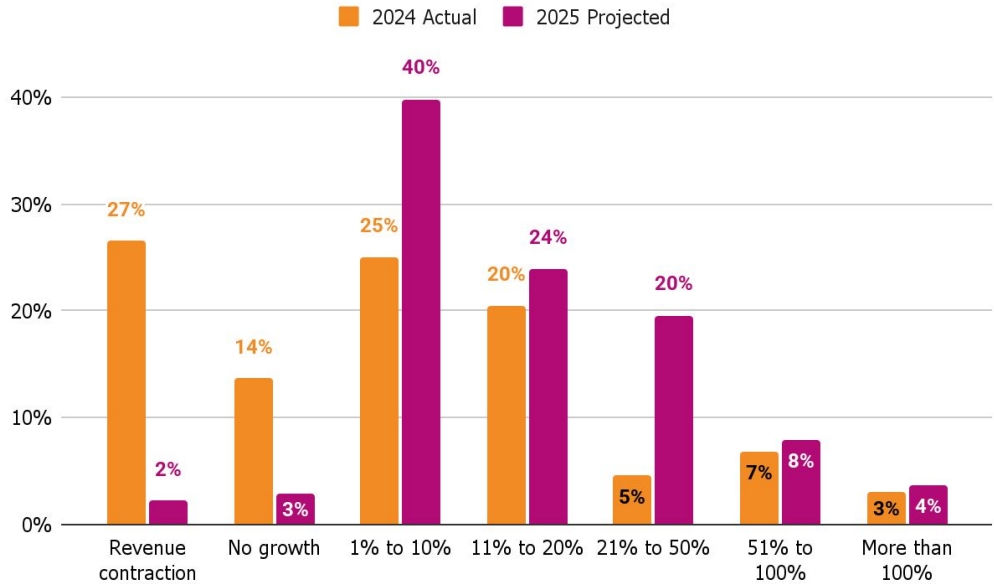
- More likely to prioritize AI for revenue-generating functions — especially candidate qualification (**70%** vs. **51%** overall) and candidate/client matching (**60%** vs. **51%** overall).
- They are rigorous with ROI measurement of technology and are focused on strategically adopting AI

Industry Growth & Economic Climate

Agencies expect to grow faster in 2025

Respondents were very optimistic about revenue growth in 2025. Roughly two-thirds (64%) said they're projecting a growth rate between 1% and 20%, and nearly a third (32%) expect to grow by 21% or more. Despite considerable contraction and lack of growth in 2024, only 3% of respondents don't think they will grow this year, and just 2% anticipate contraction.

Staffing agency revenue growth: 2024 actual vs 2025 projected

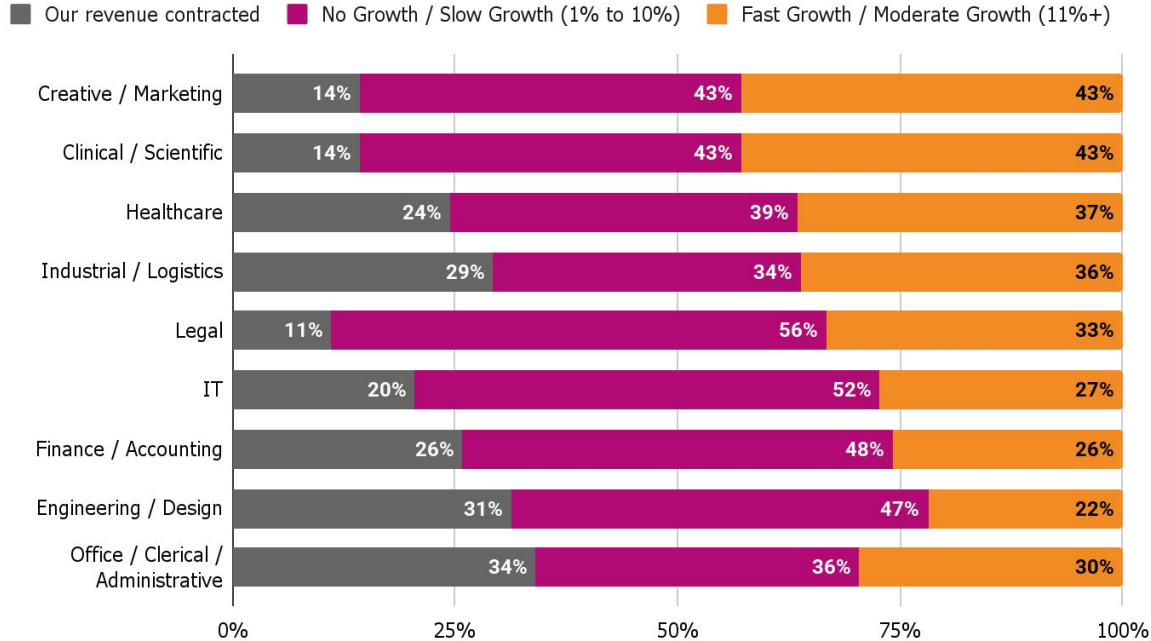


Compared to the results of last year's survey, the proportion of businesses forecasting no growth significantly decreased from 12% in 2024 to 3% in 2025.

There was also a sharp decline in the percentage of businesses forecasting revenue contraction, dropping from 30% in 2024 to 2% in 2025.

Creative / marketing and clinical / scientific led growth in 2024

2024 revenue growth rate by industry



Industries with the highest reported contraction in 2024 included:

34% Office / Clerical / Administrative

31% Engineering / Design

29% Industrial / Logistics

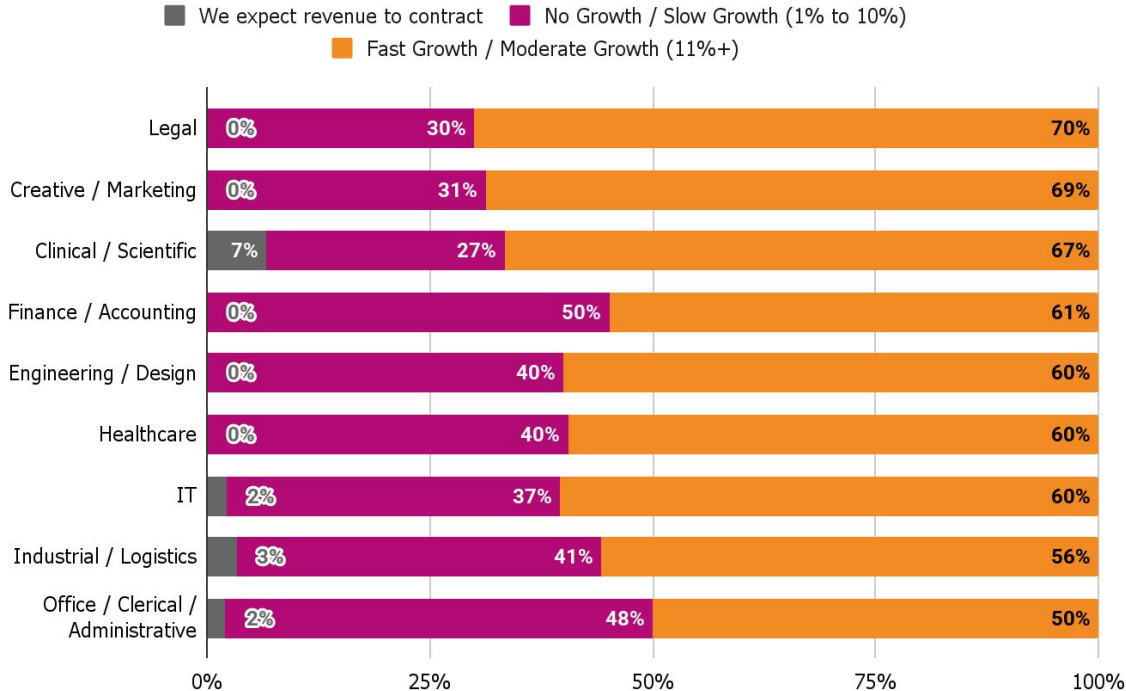
Meanwhile, the most likely to report a growth rate of 11% or more included:

43% Creative / Marketing

43% Clinical / Scientific

Faster growth expected across industries

2025 anticipated revenue growth rate by industry

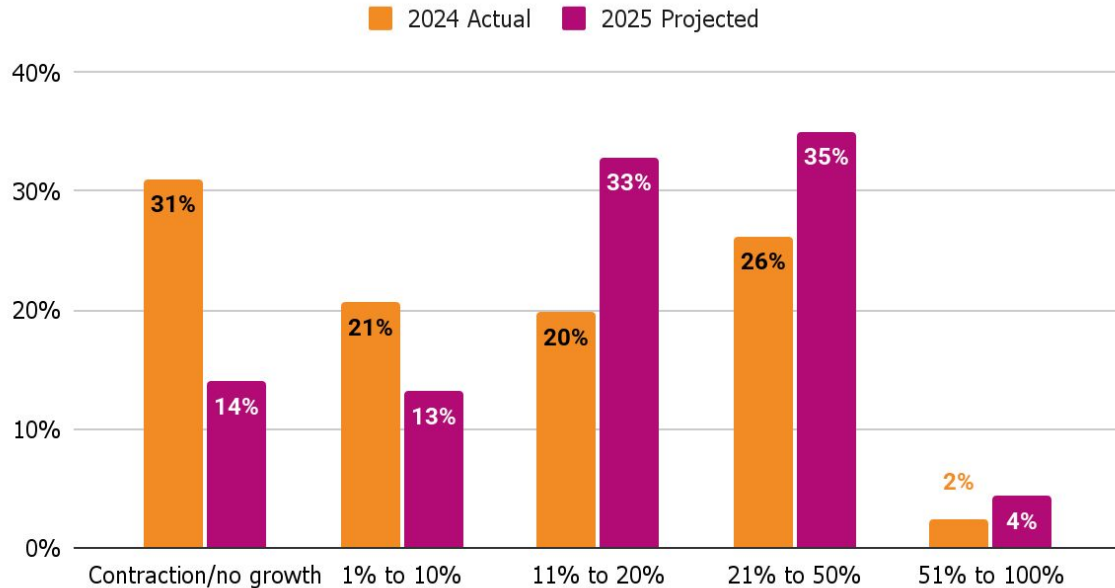


The vast majority of agencies are planning to grow faster in 2025.

More than half of respondents in all industries project a growth rate of **11%** or higher.

Faster growth agencies generate higher margins

Staffing agency gross margin: 2024 actual vs 2025 projected

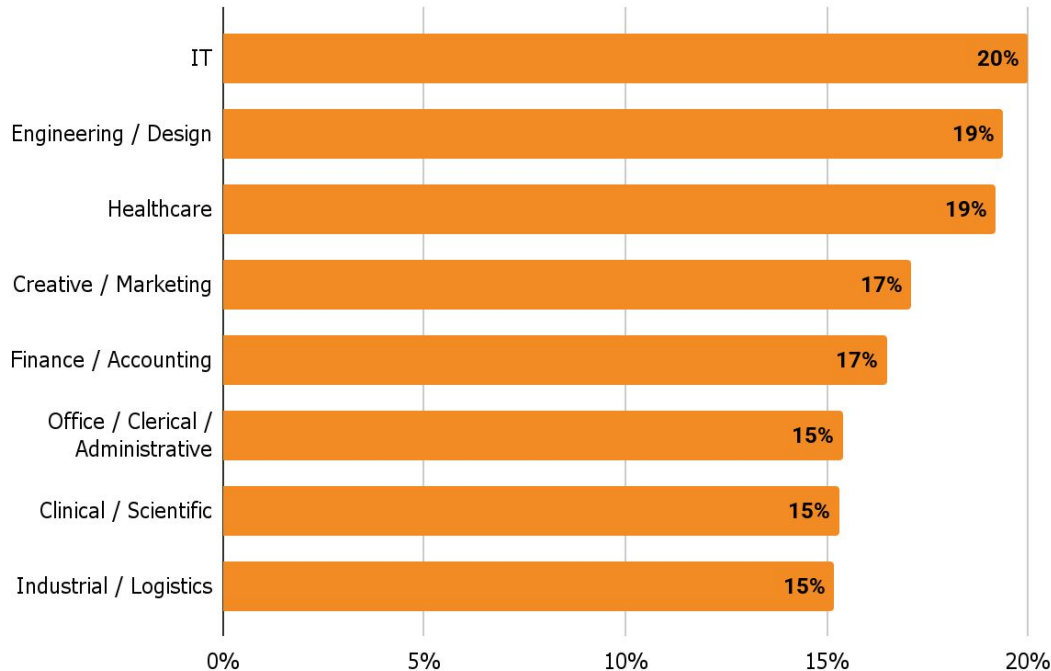


Nearly seven in 10 (**68%**) staffing agencies anticipate a gross margin between **11%** and **50%** in **2025**, although only **46%** fell into this range in 2024.

And despite **31%** of respondents reporting contraction or no growth for 2024, only **14%** are expecting the same in 2025.

IT expects highest gross margin in 2025

Average anticipated gross margin for 2025 by industry



Across all growth categories, IT predicts the highest average gross margin (**20%**).

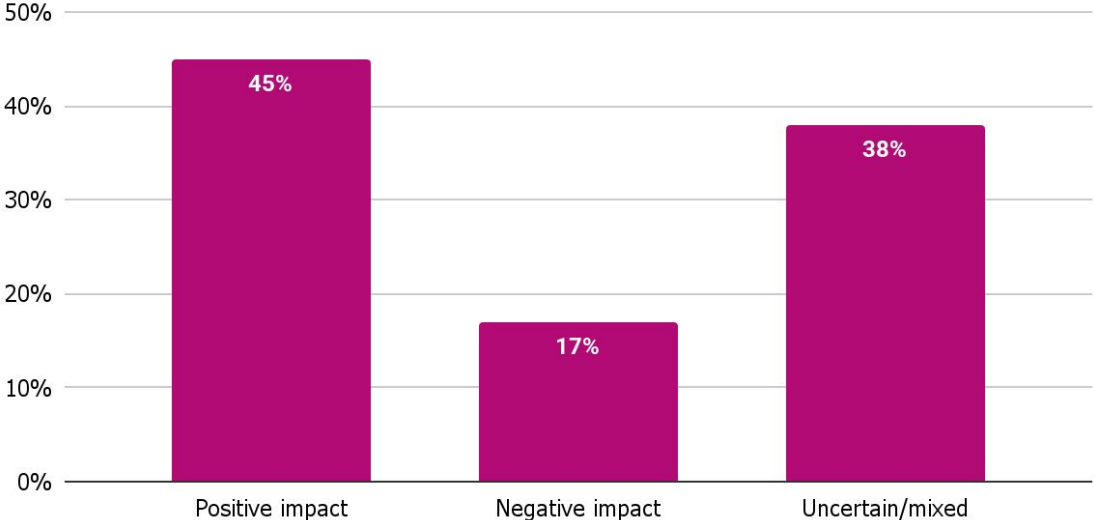


*While there is pent-up demand for contingent and direct labor, **companies remain hesitant to staff up due to economic uncertainty.** Many organizations are operating with financial conservatism, almost as if bracing for an impending downturn, navigating with extreme caution in an unpredictable landscape.*

~ Survey response

2025 begins with positive economic predictions

How do you believe the current economic climate will impact your agency in 2025?



At the start of the year, **45%** of respondents had a positive economic outlook, up from **32%** in 2024, with many expressing general predictions of growth.

Only **17%** said the economic climate would negatively impact their agency, down from **23%** in 2024.

Shift to cautious optimism (April pulse survey)

When we asked again in April what impact they expected from the current economic climate, respondents were cautious and concerned, but some remained hopeful for future improvements:

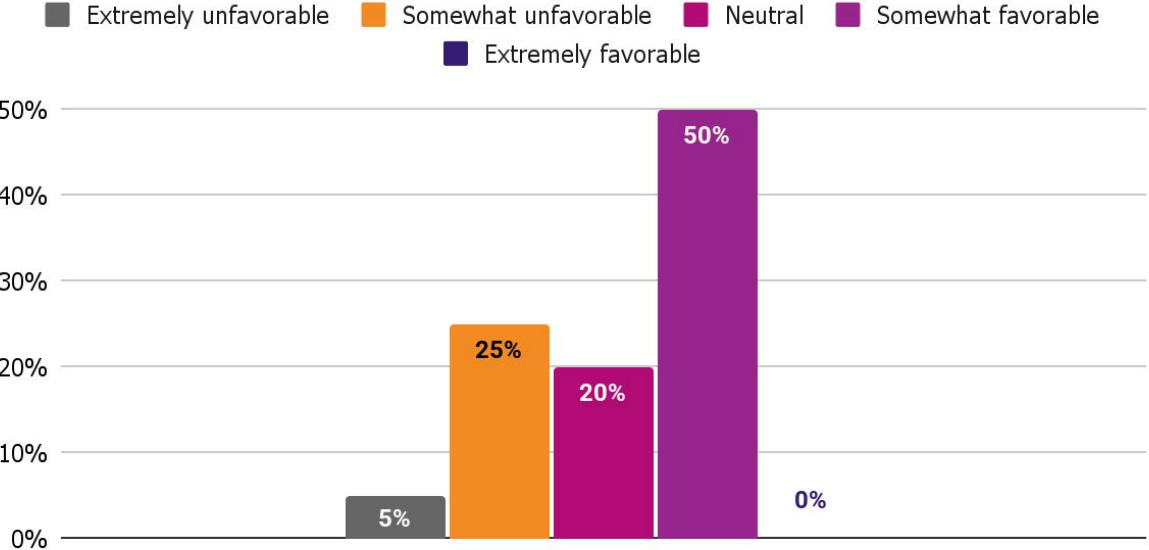
- “I didn't think [it would have much impact] originally, but at this point I think it's so unpredictable that it most likely will not be positive.”
- “The tariff uncertainty has our commercial sector flat to negative.”
- “It will be somewhat challenging if tariffs and other elements keep getting inserted into a fragile recovery.”
- “The uncertainty is causing customers to be cautious.”
- “Job orders are low, very little direct hire, wait and see mentality. Companies are doing more with less and investing in tech before contractors.”
- “Clients are slow to add, but are optimistic about the future.”
- “I feel once the economy gets on the same page more jobs will be created.”

“So far 2025 has been a challenge. It is difficult to get in front of prospects.”

~ April survey response

2025 outlook somewhat favorable (April pulse survey)

How would you rate your business outlook for the rest of 2025?

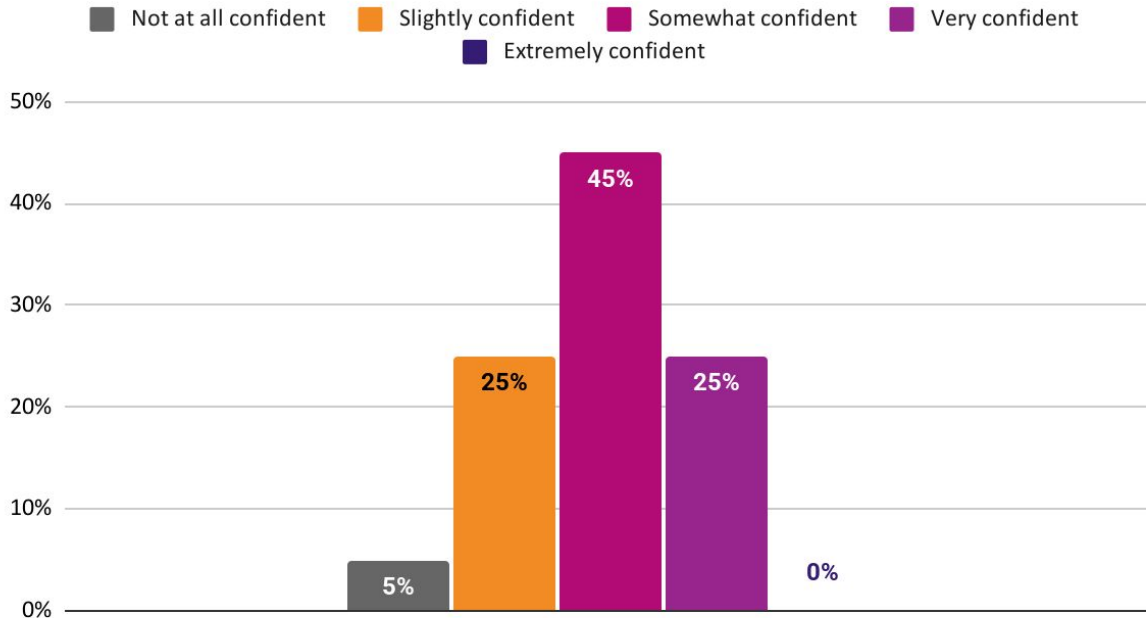


Half of the respondents surveyed in April said they had a somewhat favorable outlook for the rest of the year.

25% had a somewhat negative outlook, and **5%** said their outlook was extremely unfavorable.

Growth confidence wavers (April pulse survey)

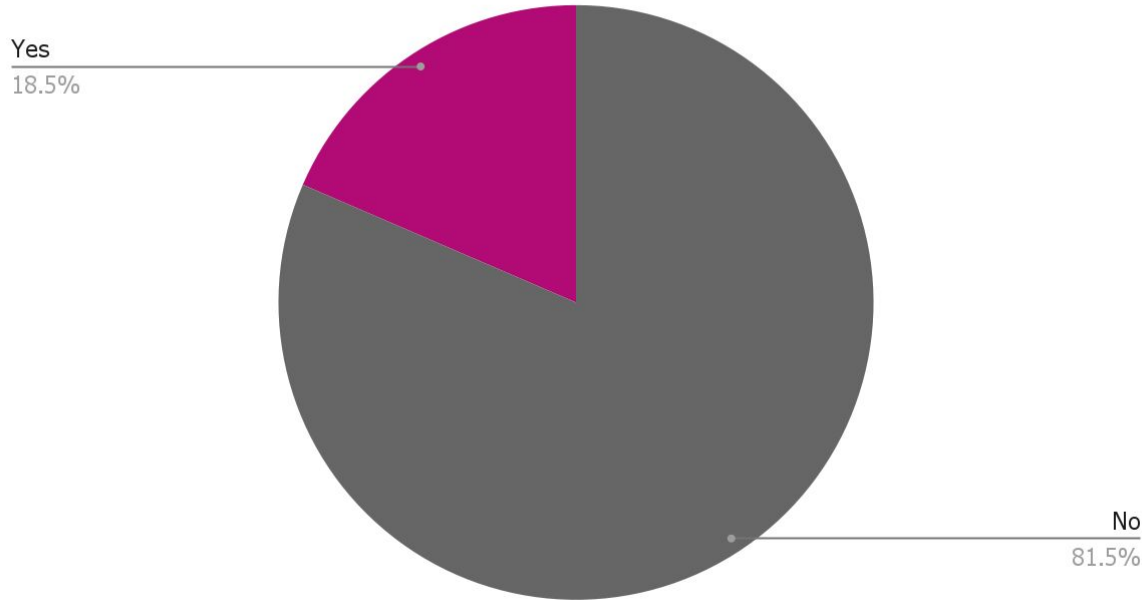
How confident are you about achieving your revenue goals this year?



45% of agencies surveyed in April were somewhat confident about reaching their revenue goals for the year, but only 25% were very confident.

1 in 5 anticipate acquisition activity

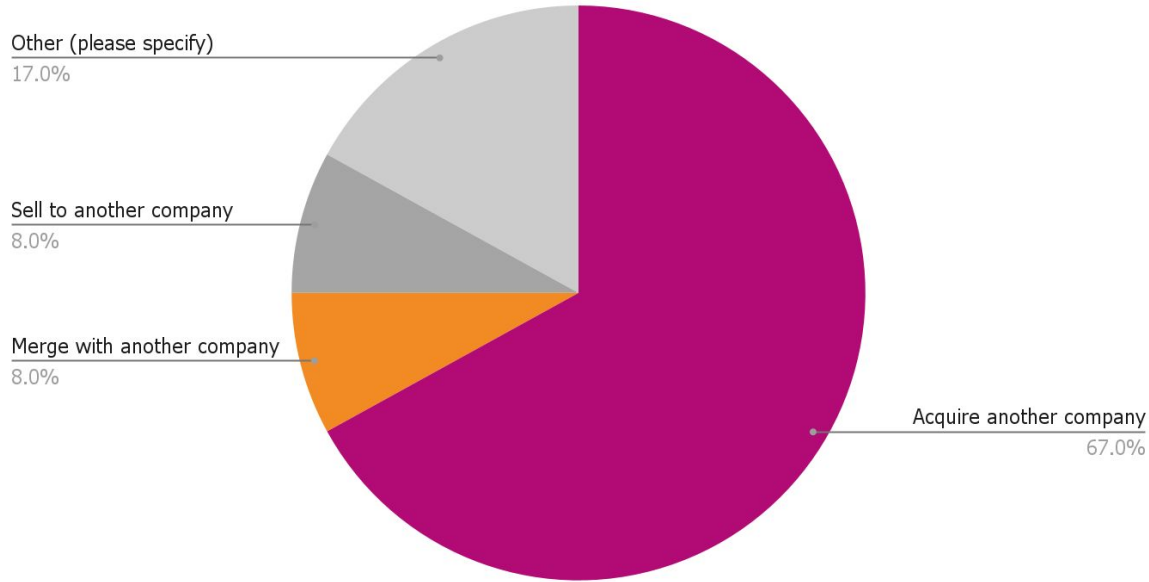
Are you planning any acquisition activity in 2025?



19% of respondents said their agency is planning acquisition activity in 2025, down slightly from **20%** in 2024.

Most plan to acquire, not merge or sell

What type of acquisition activity are you planning?



Of those agencies planning acquisition activity in 2025, most (**67%**) are looking to acquire another company.

Companies that noted “other” acquisition plans were expanding into other states or verticals, or were open to buying another company.

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Client acquisition is 2025's greatest challenge

This year's top staffing challenges reflect a client-focused market — while it's gotten easier to find qualified candidates compared to last year's survey, struggles have increased in client acquisition.

Just **12%** of staffing agencies said they're facing a shortage of candidates, down from **17%** in 2024, and only **9%** reported difficulties finding qualified talent, down from **12%**.

Many businesses reported difficulty finding new clients (**23%**, up from **16%** in 2024) and job orders (**16%**, up from **12%**).

Top challenges for 2025:

1. Finding new clients / customers (**23%**)
2. Getting job opportunities / orders (**16%**)
3. Diminished supply of candidates (**12%**)
4. Finding qualified / reliable candidates (**9%**)
5. Sales (**8%**)

Client challenges persist (April pulse survey)

When we caught up with agencies in April, they continued to voice these challenges, as well as concerns about economic impacts and increased costs.

What is the single biggest challenge your agency faces right now?

“Finding clients ready to hire staff”

“Slow down in job orders with clients”

“Economic uncertainty”

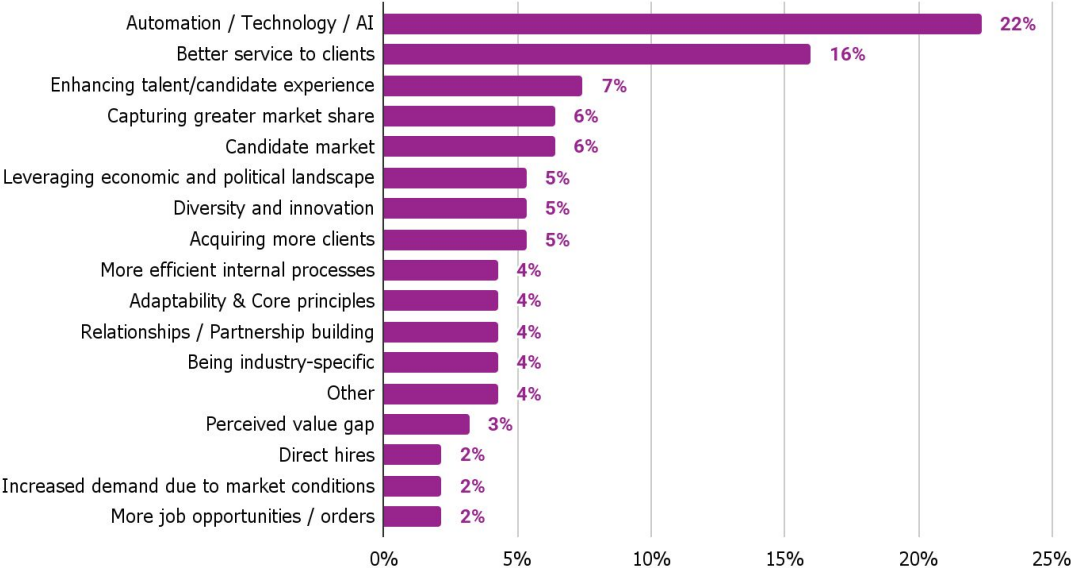
“Talent and skill set of employees lacks big time”

“Increased costs, especially with labor”

Tech adoption is 2025's biggest opportunity

Almost one-quarter (22%) of respondents said technology adoption is the biggest opportunity for driving growth this year, up from 17% last year. Agencies are also putting more emphasis on improving client services this year — 16% said providing better service to clients is a key opportunity, up from just 4% last year.

What is the biggest opportunity for driving growth in 2025?



Top opportunities for 2025:

1. Automation / technology / AI (22%)
2. Better service to clients (16%)
3. Enhancing candidate experience (7%)
4. Capturing greater market share (6%)
5. Candidate market (6%)

Key Performance Metrics



*I believe that **being authentic and mindful with every moving part of a search is what clients want.** They are creating a culture in their company and it is important to keep this top of mind when you have the privilege of helping them build their teams.*

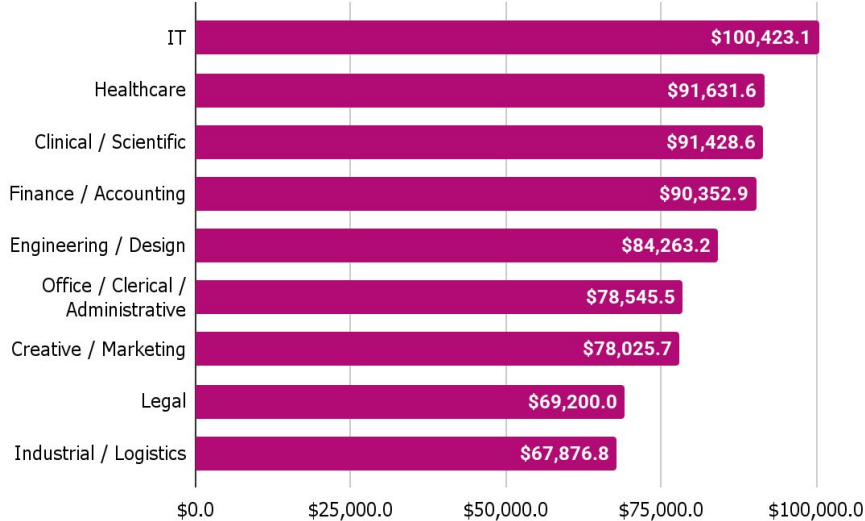
~ Survey response

IT reports highest on-target-earnings

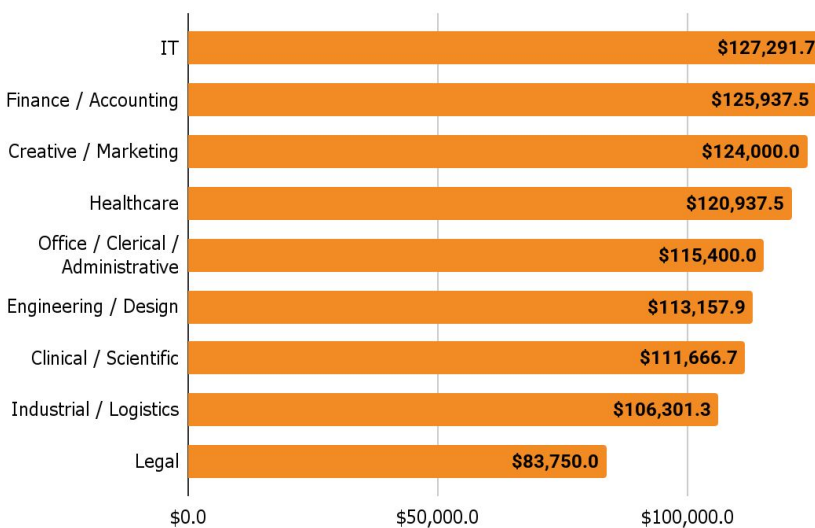
On average, respondents reported annual on-target-earnings (OTE) of **\$83,692** for recruiters and **\$114,227** for sales representatives. IT had the highest OTE for both recruiters (**\$100,423**) and sales representatives (**\$127,292**), while legal and industrial / logistics had the lowest.

What is the average annual on-target-earnings (OTE) for recruiters and sales representatives at your company?

Recruiters

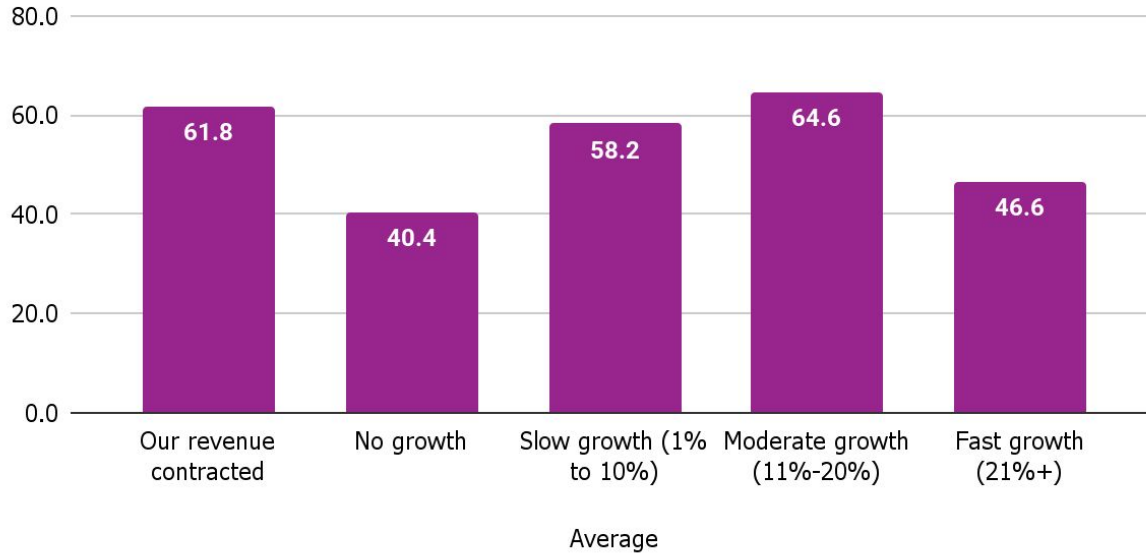


Sales representatives



Average NPS (Net Promoter Score®) drops to 55.4

What was the most recent NPS (Net Promoter Score®) for your business?



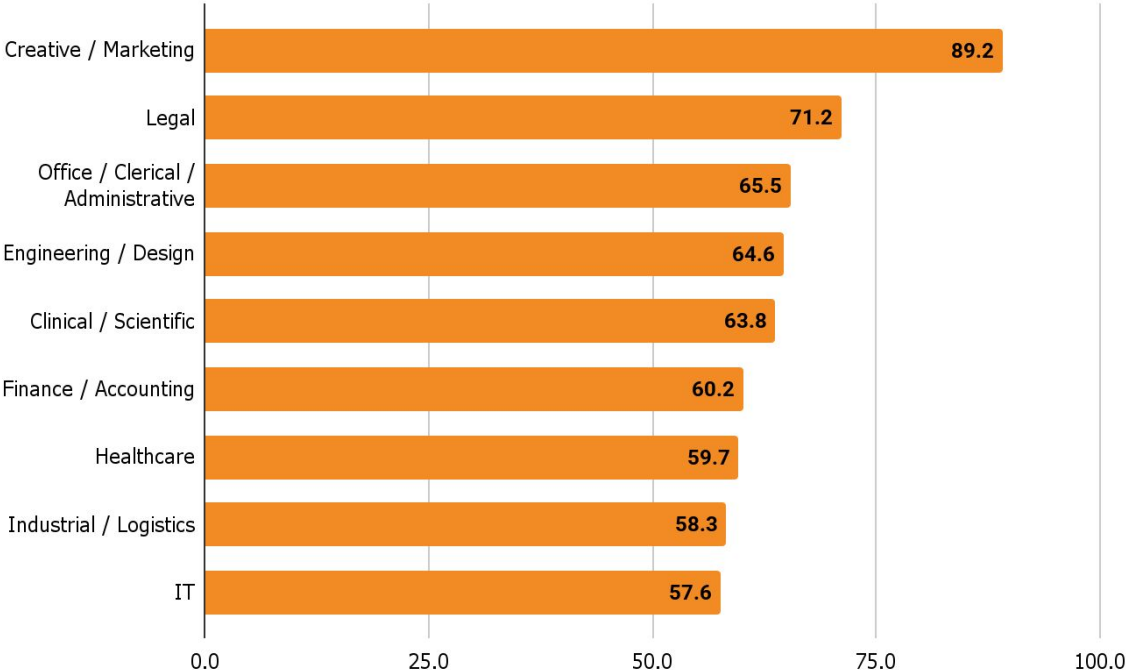
Note that these scores are self-reported, which is likely why they are higher than other industry benchmarks, such as those reported by ClearlyRated. Because of this, the most important finding isn't the specific scores themselves, but rather the directional trends.

The average NPS (Net Promoter Score®) for participating agencies this year was **55.4**, down from **64.3** last year.

Agencies that grew moderately in 2024 (**11%** to **20%**) had the highest average score at **64.6**, suggesting that moderate-growth agencies may have found the optimal balance between growth and service quality. Meanwhile, rapid growth (21%+) may lead to more challenges in meeting client expectations.

Creative / marketing boasts the highest NPS

What was the most recent NPS (Net Promoter Score®) for your business?



By industry served, the highest NPS scores this year were reported in the creative / marketing (**89.2**) and legal (**71.2**).

2025 Staffing Insights Report (Talent Edition)

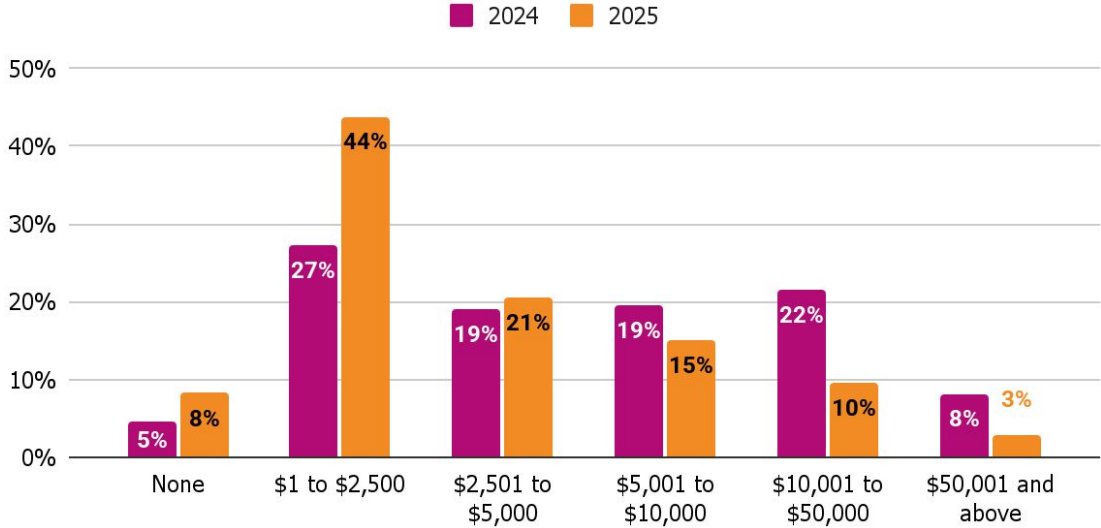
Stay Ahead in Staffing: Anticipate
and Adapt to Candidate Needs

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Job board spend decreases

What is your average monthly spend on job boards?

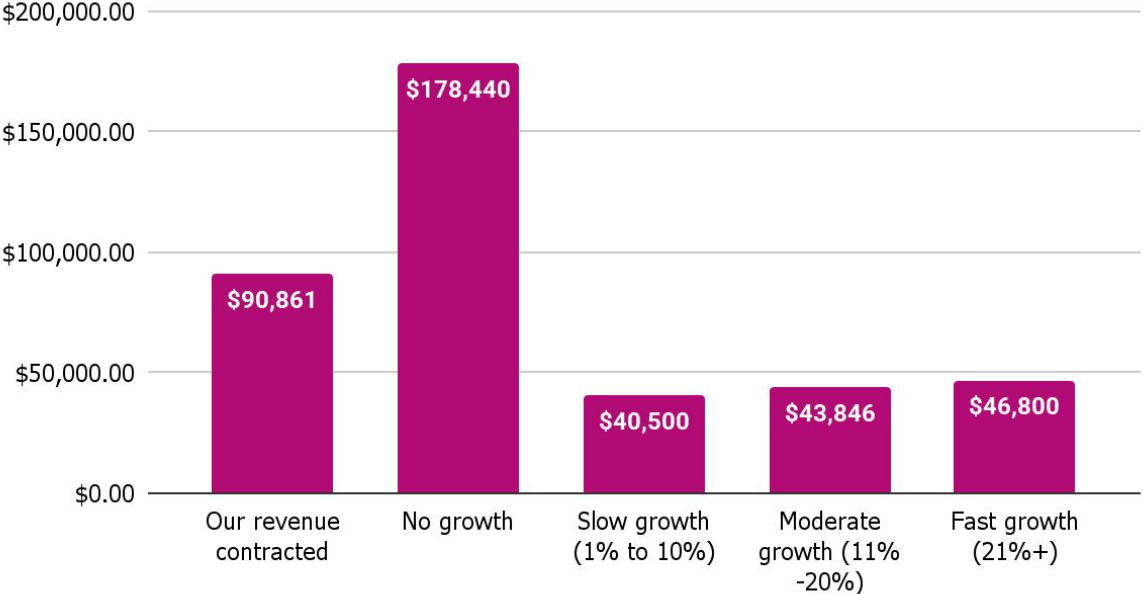


More than four in 10 respondents (44%) said they're spending **less than \$2,500** on job boards monthly this year.

The average monthly spend among respondents was **\$7,192**, a significant decrease from last year's average of **\$16,388**.

Agencies spend an average of \$79,512 annually on job boards, with faster growth agencies spending less than counterparts

Annual job board spend by growth rate

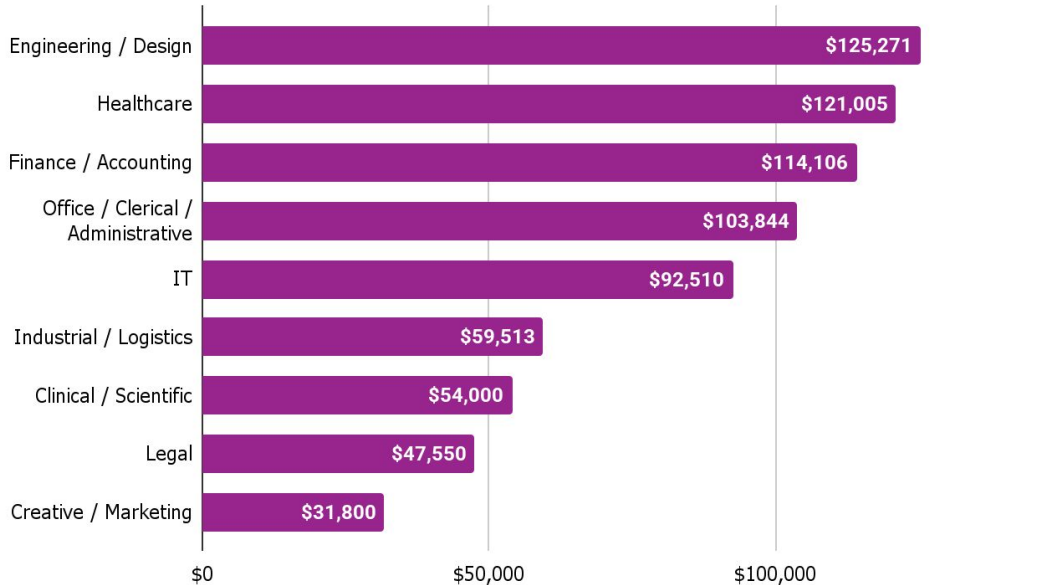


Agencies that experienced no revenue growth last year were more likely to report spending far more on job boards, averaging **\$178,440** per year.

Meanwhile, annual spending averaged less than **\$48,000** for companies that grew in 2024.

Creative / marketing spends least on job boards

Annual job board spend by vertical



Industries that reported spending the most on job boards included engineering / design and healthcare, while creative / marketing spent the least.

Source Effectiveness



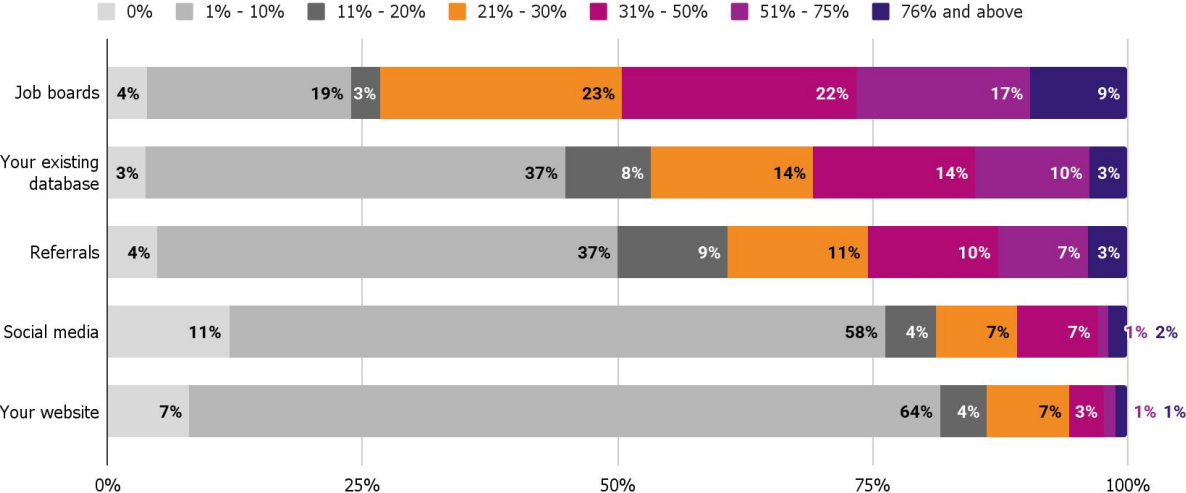
*In times of scarcity, both clients and candidates recognize the value of a personalized, high-quality approach. **Those who prioritize relationships, expertise, and true partnership will stand out and thrive.***

~ Survey response

Job boards continue to be the top placement source

While job boards are still where the majority of businesses are getting most of their placements, referrals are rising as a highly effective source.

What percentage of your placements come from the following sources?

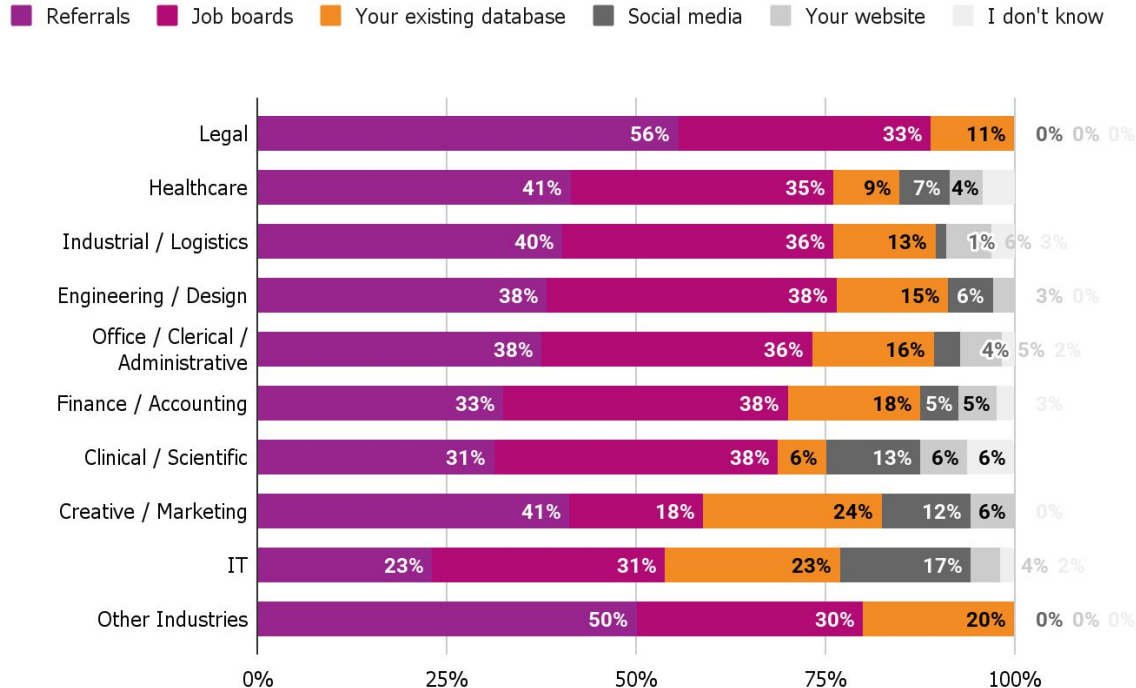


Regardless of revenue growth rate, most businesses estimated that between **21%** and **50%** of their placements come from job boards.

The majority of companies didn't consider their website or social media primary sources of placements — most (**64%** and **58%**, respectively) said they made up between **1%** and **10%** of their placements.

Legal and healthcare rely heavily on referrals

Which source results in the highest placement rate?

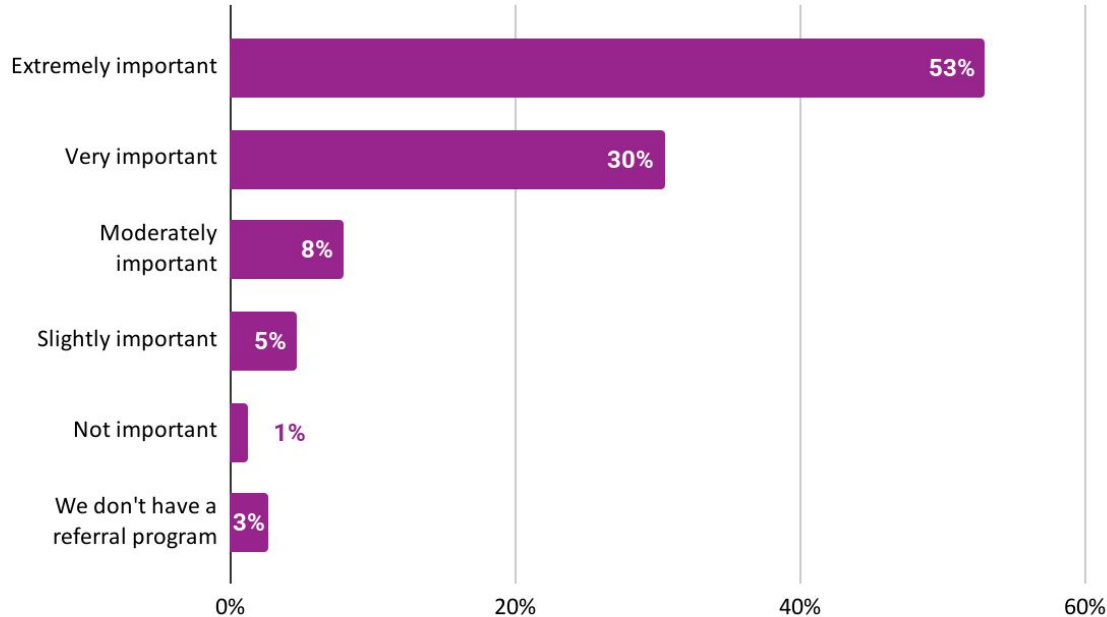


Legal, healthcare, and industrial / logistics were most likely to cite referrals and job boards as their top sources.

Meanwhile, creative / marketing and IT were more likely to rely on their existing databases than other industries.

Referrals are essential for growth

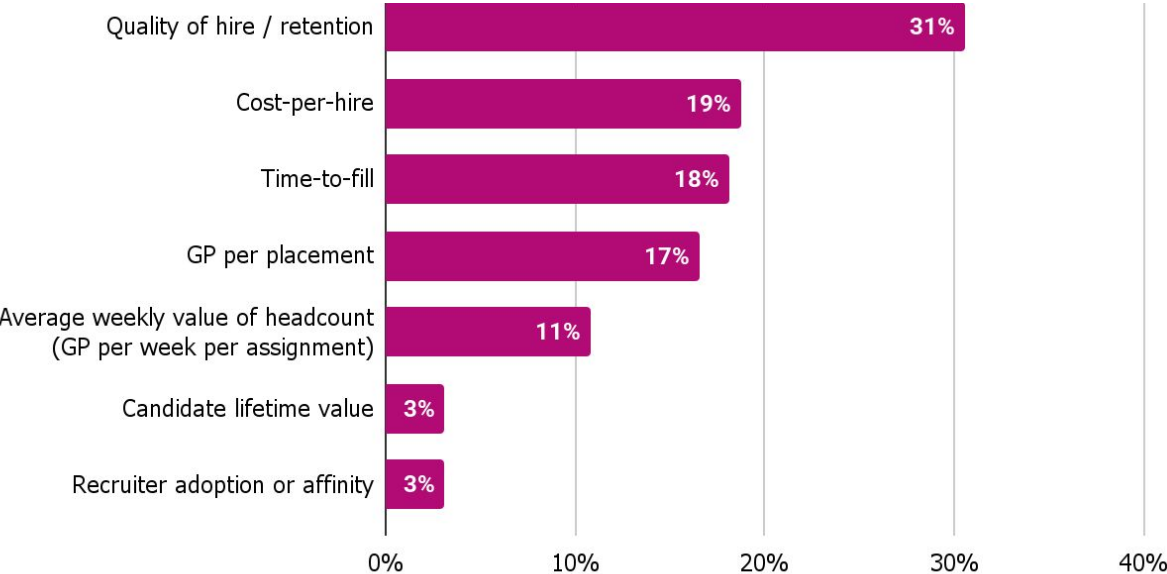
How important are referrals for your organization?



The majority of respondents said referrals are important to their business, with the fastest-growing agencies (**71%**) most likely to say referrals are “extremely important.”

Quality of hire is the top ROI metric

What is the most important metric for measuring the ROI of your talent sources?



When it comes to measuring ROI of talent sources, **31%** respondents ranked quality of hire as their top metric.

Cost-per-hire and time-to-fill were also cited as important metrics.

Technology & Software



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Increase in
Gross Profit

140%
Improvement in
Redeploy Rates

12x
Return on Your
Investment

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SPRING 2025	SPRING 2025	SPRING 2025	SPRING 2025	SPRING 2025	SPRING 2025	SPRING 2025
Best Est. ROI	Momentum Leader	Users Most Likely To Recommend <small>HIG-MARKET</small>	Best Meets Requirements <small>HIG-MARKET</small>	Best Support	Easiest To Use	Easiest To Do Business With





*One of the biggest opportunities for staffing agencies lies in **leveraging technology to enhance service delivery and efficiency.***

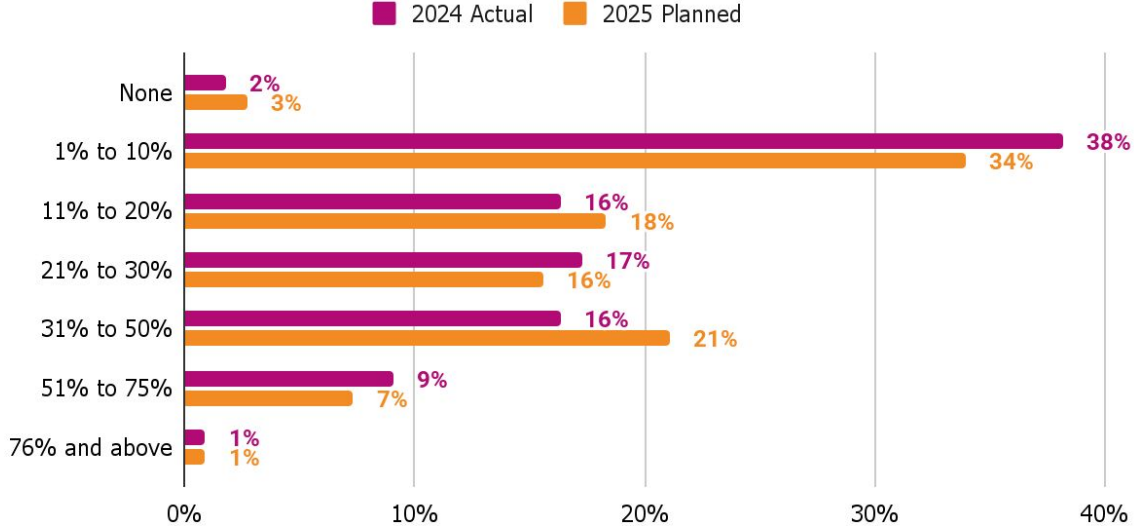
The ongoing digital transformation across industries presents several ways staffing agencies can capitalize on new opportunities.

~ Survey response

Agencies prioritize tech investments

More than a third of respondents (**38%**) dedicated between **1% to 10%** of their budget to software or technology solutions in 2024, and **34%** plan to set aside the same percentage this year. About one in five (**21%**) plan to spend **31% to 50%** of their total budget on software and technology in 2025.

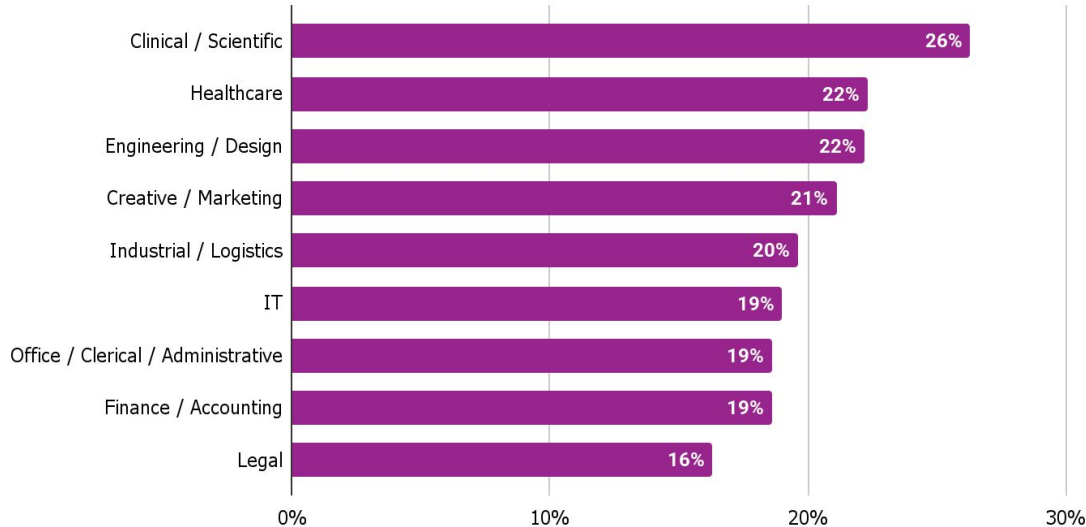
What percentage of your total budget is dedicated to software or technology solutions?



All fast-growth agencies plan to dedicate at least some of their budget to tech investments this year — **21%** plan to spend **21% to 30%** and **29%** plan to spend **31% to 50%**.

Planned tech investments highest in clinical / scientific

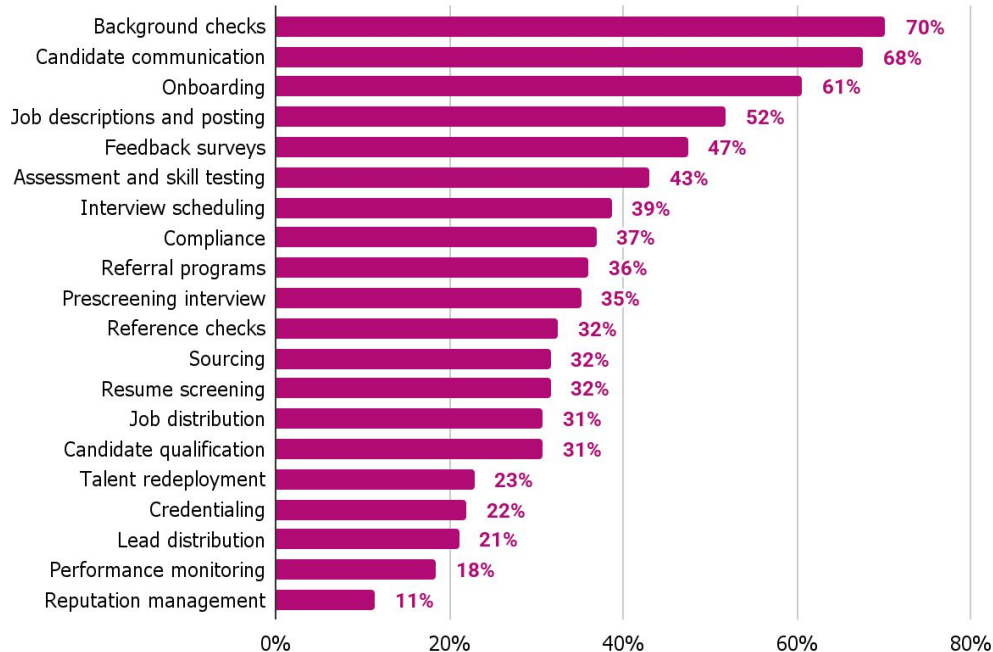
Average percentage of budget planned to dedicate to software or technology solutions in 2025



Agencies serving clinical / scientific, healthcare, and engineering / design verticals were most likely to allot more of their budget toward software and technology.

Making progress toward automating processes

Which of the following processes has your company already automated?

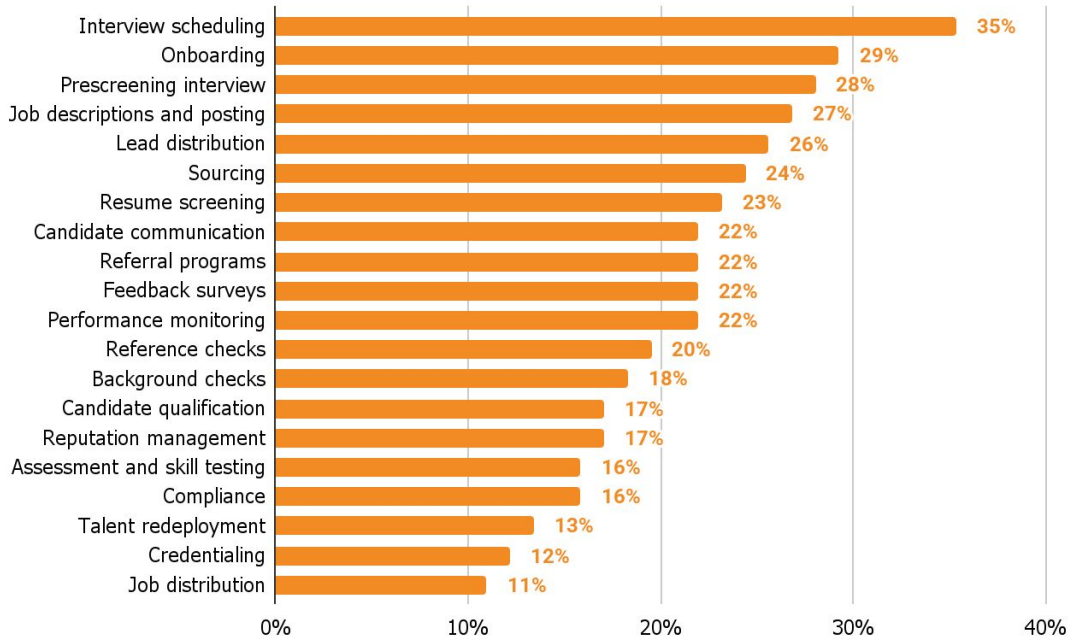


Background checks (**70%**), candidate communication (**68%**), and onboarding (**61%**) were the most commonly automated processes.

Fast-growth agencies (21%+ revenue growth) were more likely than agencies overall to have automated compliance (**57%** vs. **37%**) and their referral programs (**43%** vs. **36%**). Meanwhile, only **11%** of firms overall have automated reputation management.

Scheduling most likely to be automated in 2025

Which of the following processes does your company plan to automate in 2025?



This year, many agencies are looking to simplify the interview process — **35%** of respondents said their company is planning to automate interview scheduling, and **28%** intend to automate prescreening interviews.

Agencies that reported revenue contraction (**59%**) and fast-growth agencies (**42%**) were most interested in automating interview scheduling.



*Provide value above and beyond what was previously expected and **raise the bar**. This is a people business. Certain things can be automated, and others need human interaction.*

~ Survey response



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4x

Placements from Lead Sources

Boost Productivity

90%

Time Saved on Repetitive Manual Tasks

Double Conversions

2x

Double Website Lead Conversion

Speed-Up Submittals

75%

Time Saved Submitting Candidates

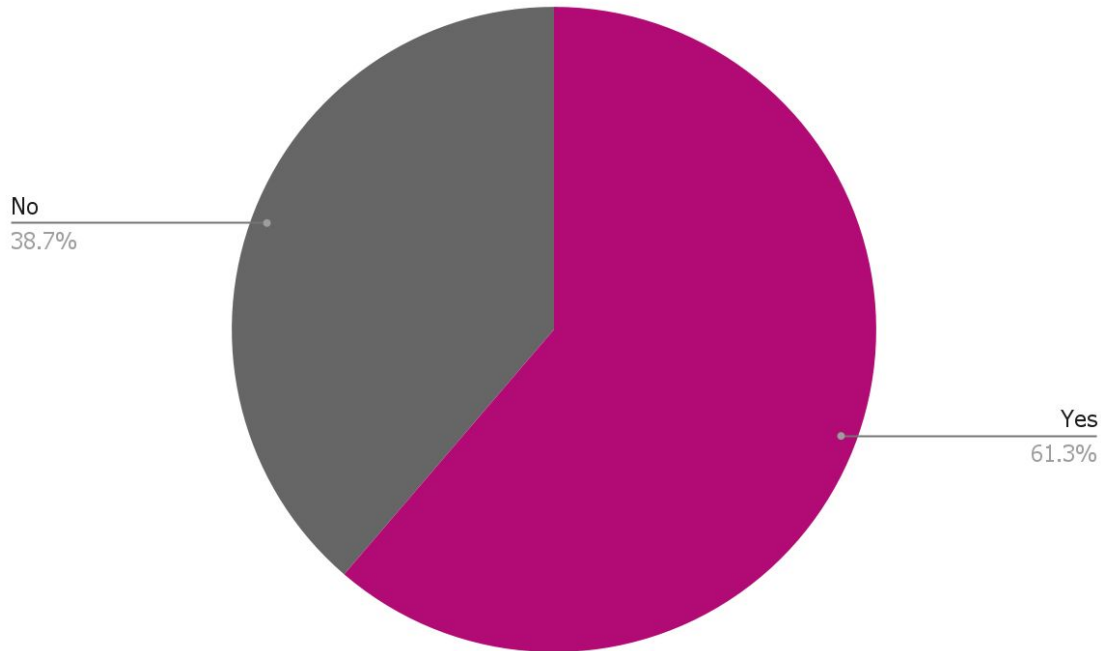
Trusted AI Provider to Leading Staffing Firms



State of Staffing Sponsor

More agencies adopt AI

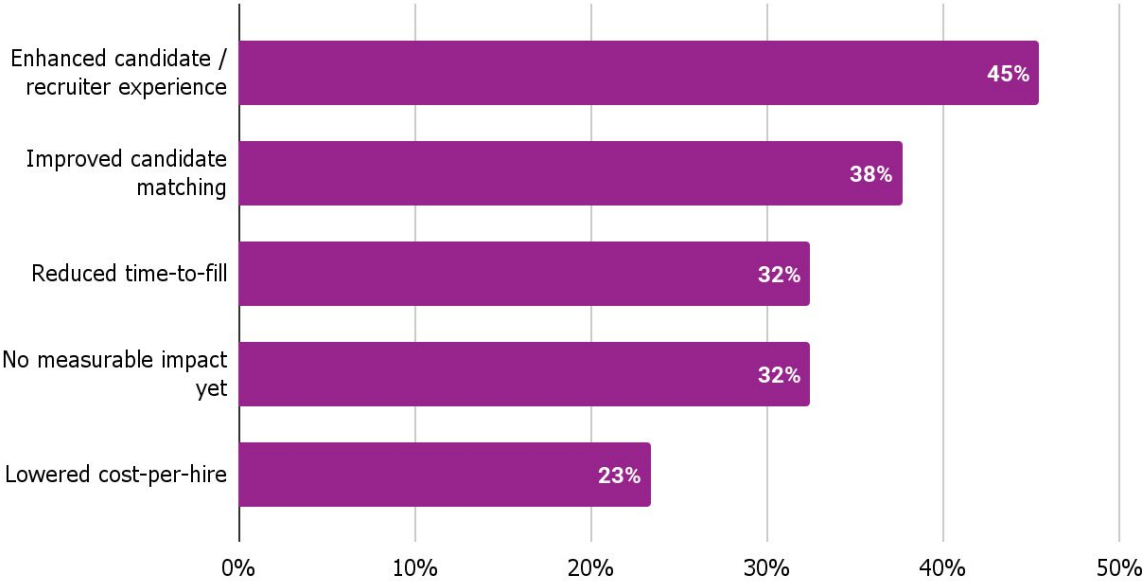
Does your company currently use artificial intelligence (AI) for business applications?



Staffing agencies are heavily exploring AI's potential — **61%** are already using AI for business applications, up from **48%** who said the same last year.

AI improves candidate, recruiter experience

If you're using AI, which of the following outcomes have you observed?

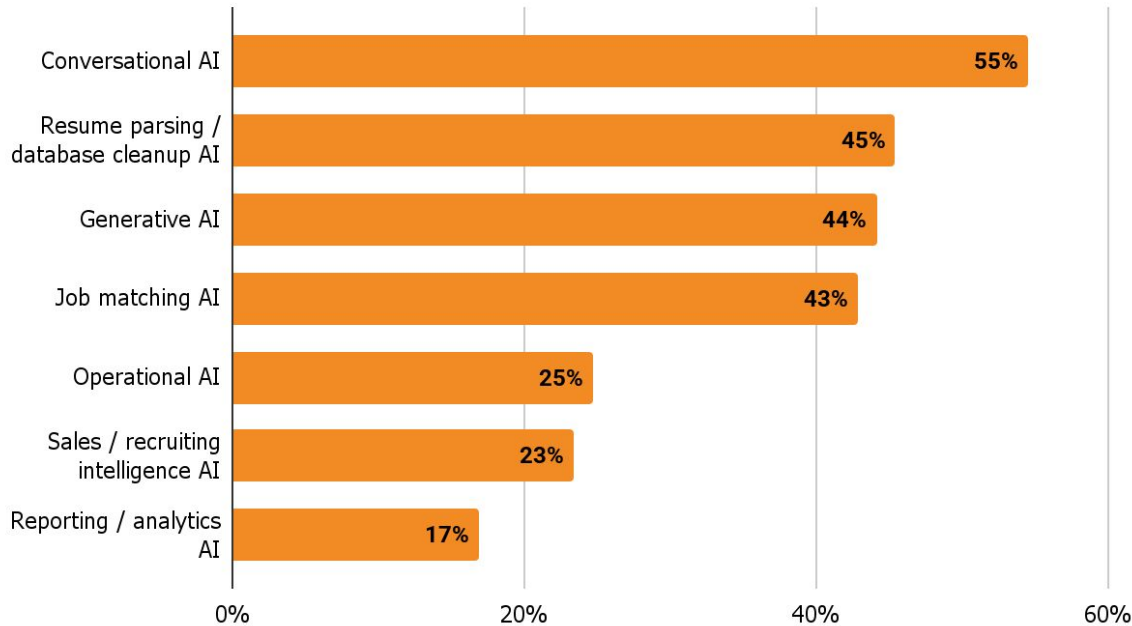


Many of the agencies currently using AI reported that it boosted the candidate / recruiter experience (**45%**) and improved candidate matching (**38%**).

32% have yet to see a measurable impact.

Conversational AI preferred among AI users

Which of the following types of AI have you implemented?

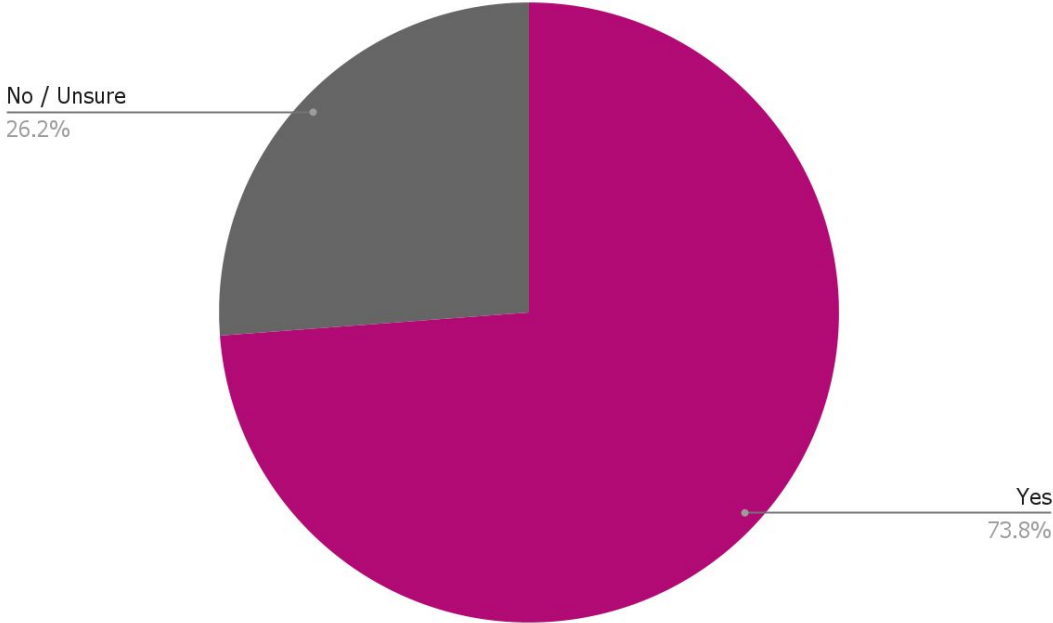


Among agencies that have adopted AI, conversational AI is the most common type of AI implemented, with more than half (**55%**) using this technology.

Many also use database cleanup AI (**45%**), generative AI (**44%**), and job matching AI (**43%**).

AI adoption plans surge

If you don't currently use AI, do you plan to adopt in 2025?

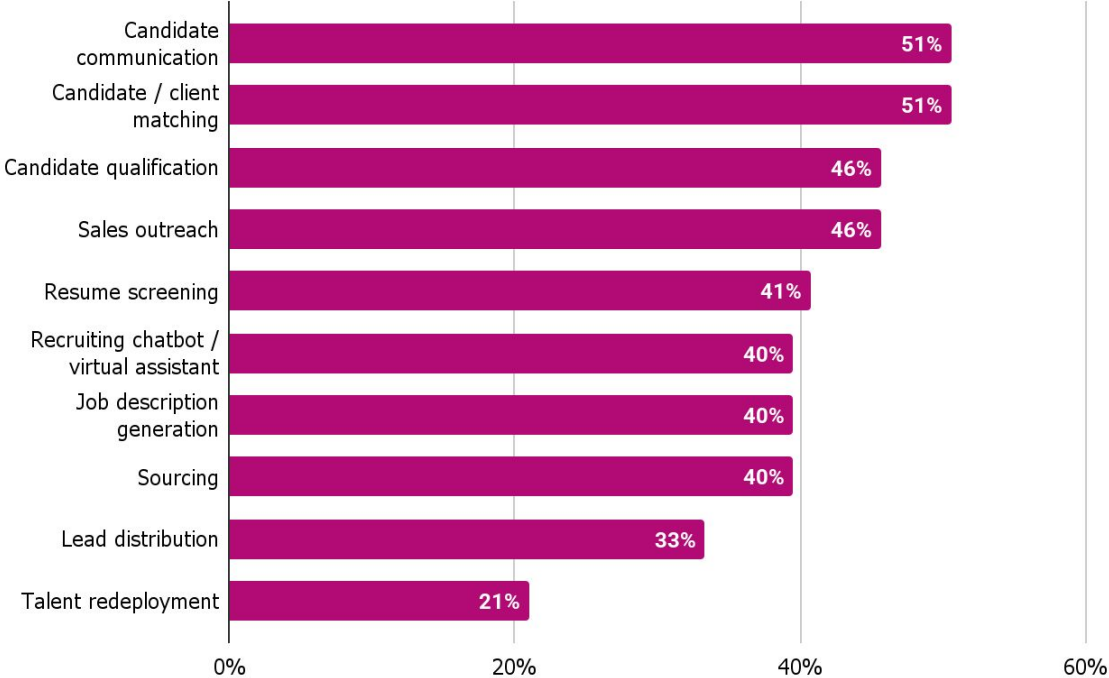


Last year, less than half of agencies (**48%**) planned to adopt AI.

This year, nearly three-quarters (**74%**) of agencies who aren't yet using AI said they plan to adopt the technology.

AI goals focus on communication and matching

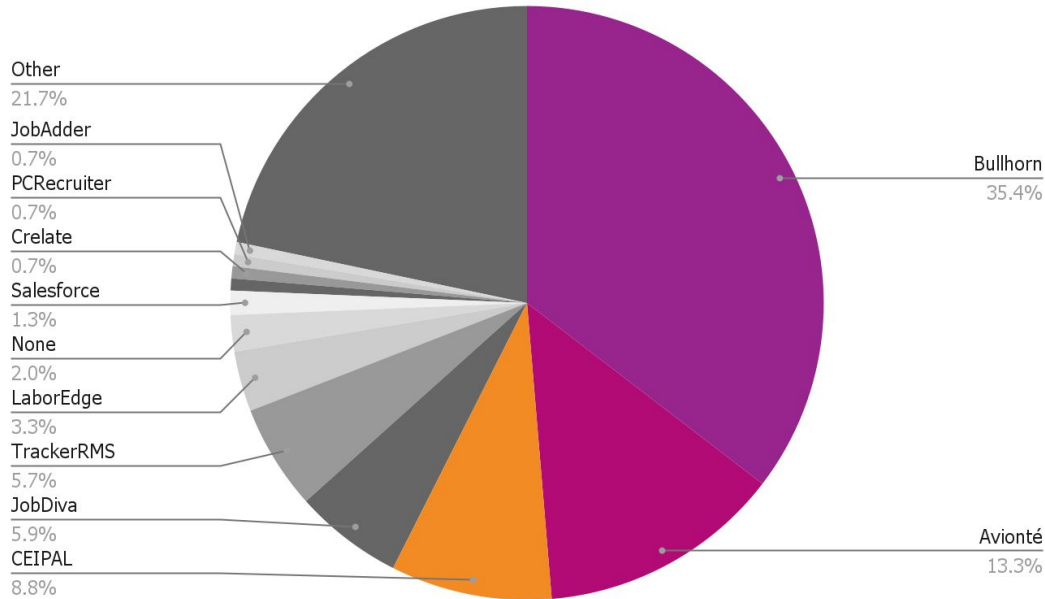
If you plan to adopt AI in 2025, which processes does your company plan to leverage AI for?



More than half of respondents (**51%**) who said they plan to adopt AI are interested in using it for candidate communication and candidate / client matching.

Bullhorn and Avionté are the top ATS solutions

Which applicant tracking system (ATS) do you use?



Bullhorn and **Avionté** remain the top choices for applicant tracking software (ATS) – together, they account for nearly half of the market share.

For our results, we combined our survey responses with publicly available data, along with customer counts emailed to StaffingHub.





For the minimum hourly rate you would accept, did you have a figure in mind?

What's the range for
I'd like to make the best



I appreciate your flexibility. We're looking at \$17 - \$25. Does that align with your



Excellent, that you for

I have a few more questions for you. How many years do you have in this field?

Now recruiters can do more with less.

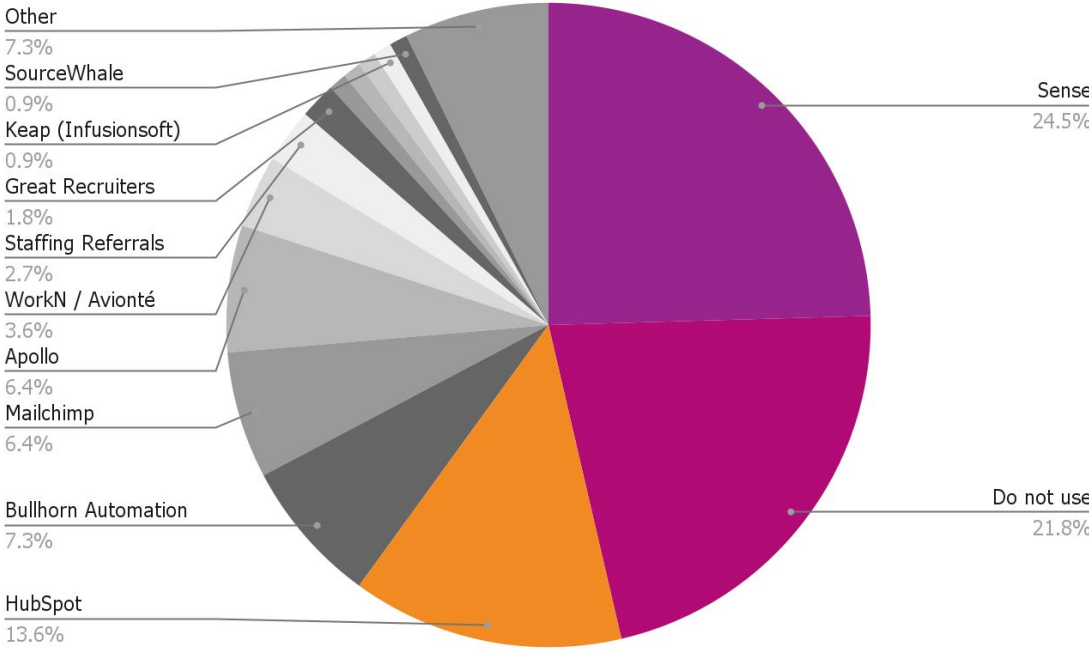
Faster placements, smarter sourcing, and more efficient engagement.

Avionté has embedded AI and automation directly into recruiter workflows for quicker decisions, higher productivity, and better results — all with less effort.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Sense and HubSpot are the leading solutions for marketing / recruiting automation

What is your primary marketing or recruiting automation solution?



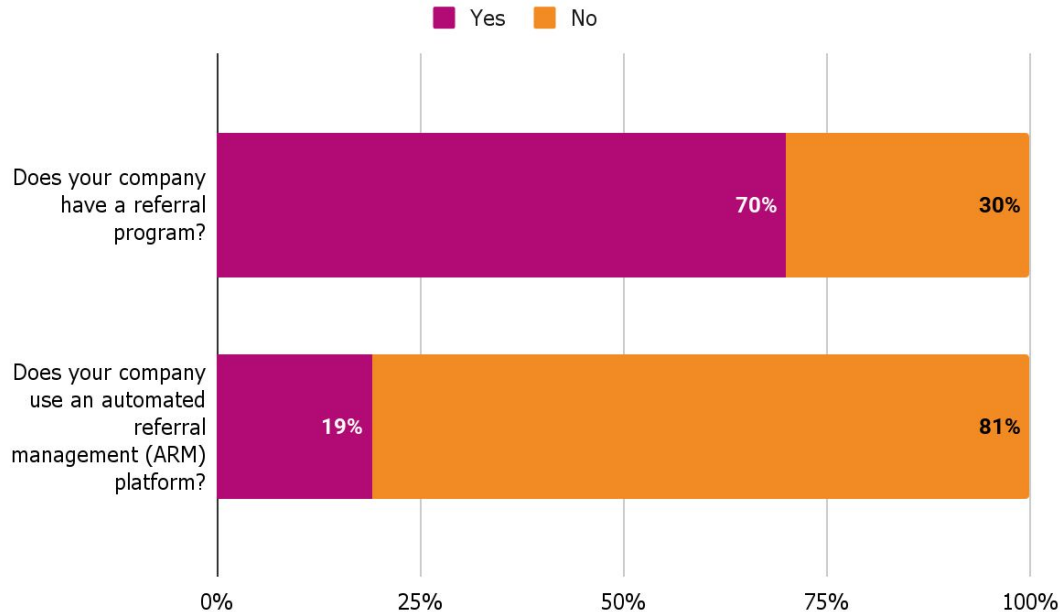
Sense was the most commonly adopted marketing or recruiting automation tool, with one in four agencies (**25%**) primarily using this software, followed by **HubSpot** at **14%**.

More than one in five agencies (**22%**) said they don't currently use a marketing automation solution.



Most agencies have a referral program

Does your company have a referral program and use automated referral management?

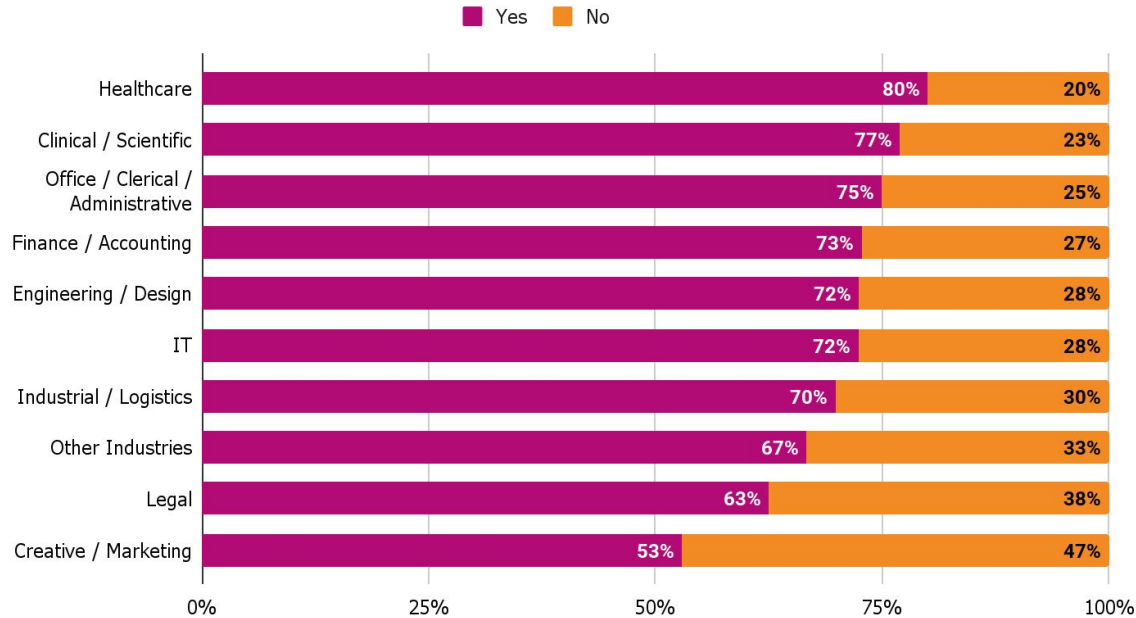


Although **70%** of staffing agencies have a referral program, only **19%** of those companies are using an automated referral management platform.

The **fastest-growing agencies** are most likely to have a referral program (**86%**) and use an automated referral management platform (**29%**).

Referral programs are most common in healthcare

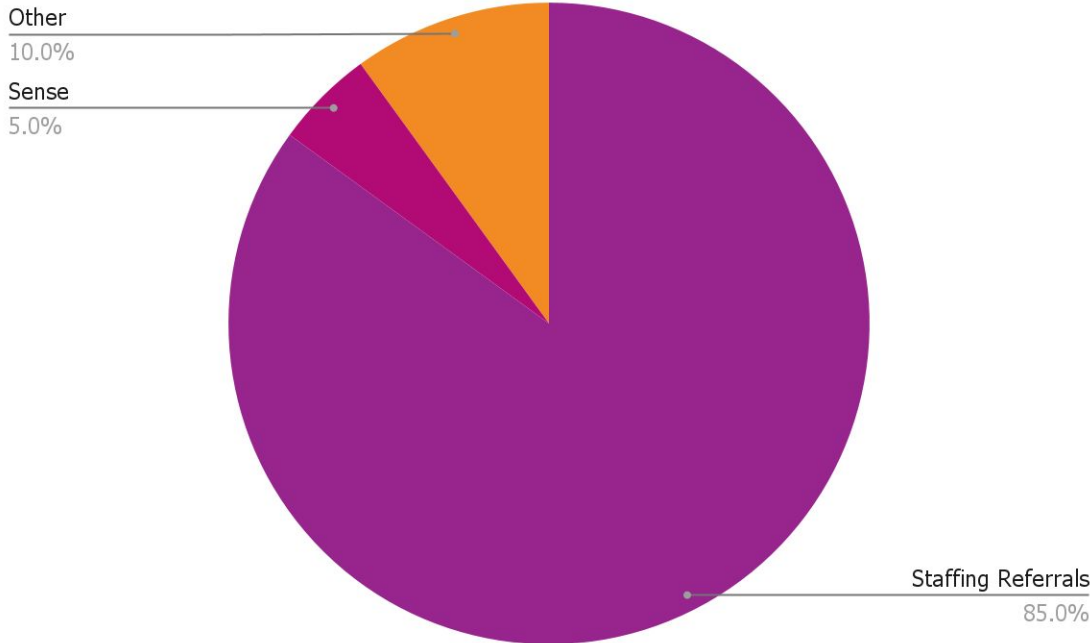
Does your company have a referral program?



Verticals that are most likely to have a referral program include healthcare (**80%**), clinical / scientific (**77%**), and office / clerical / administrative (**75%**).

Staffing Referrals is the leading automated referral management solution

What automated referral management (ARM) platform does your company use?

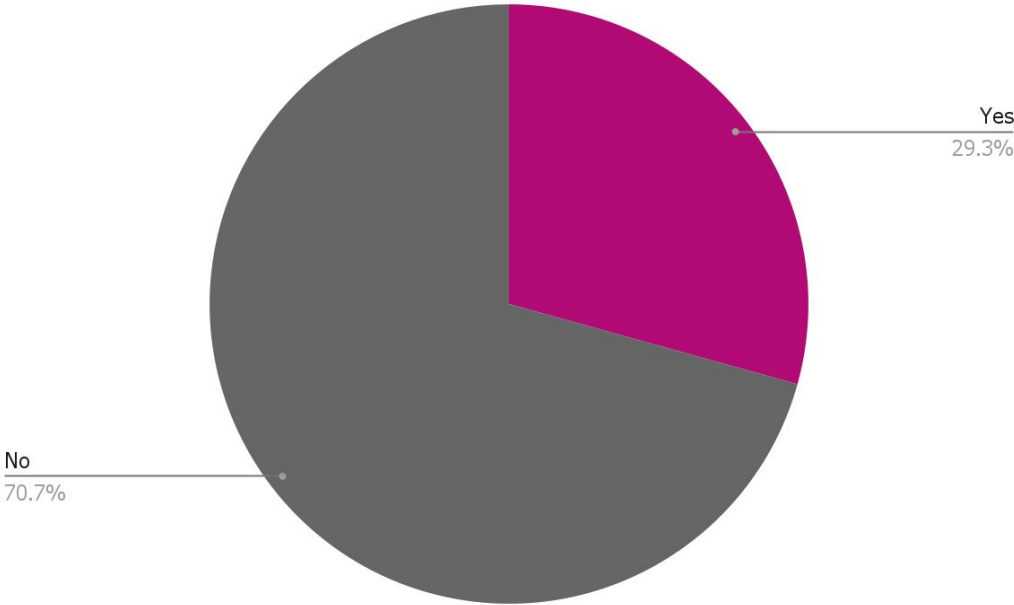


Among companies that have an automated referral management system, **Staffing Referrals** is the most common platform (**85%**), particularly for agencies that grew their revenue in 2024.



3 in 10 agencies use a vendor management system

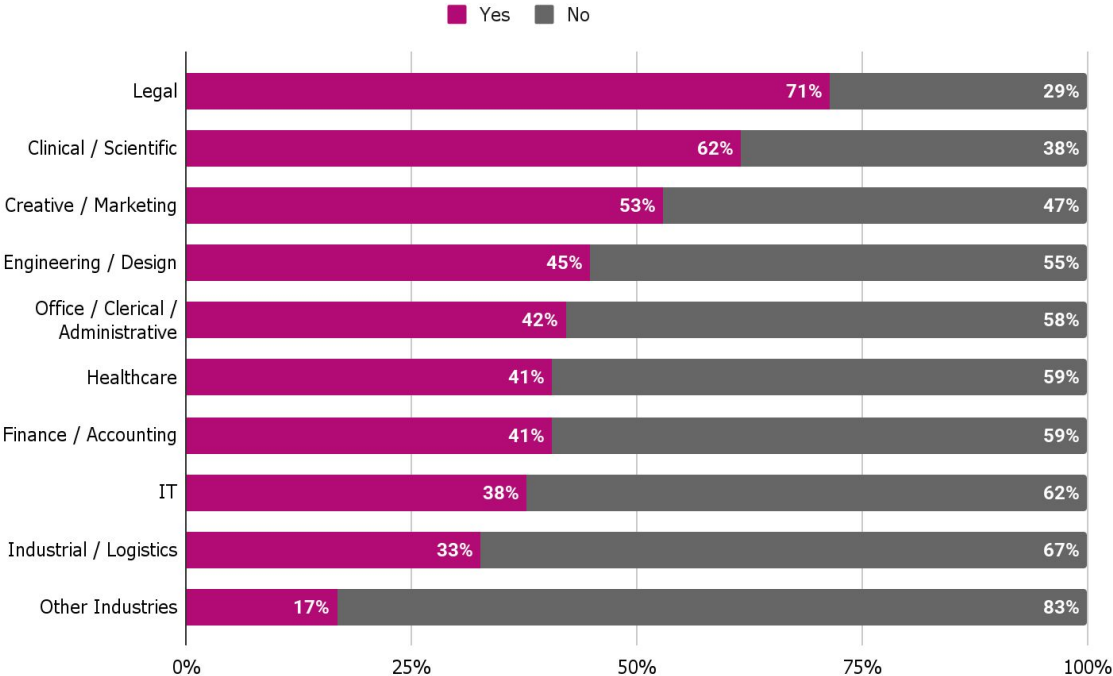
Does your agency use a vendor management system (VMS) to support one or more of your clients?



Almost **30%** of respondents said their agency uses a vendor management system (VMS).

VMS use is highest in legal and clinical / scientific

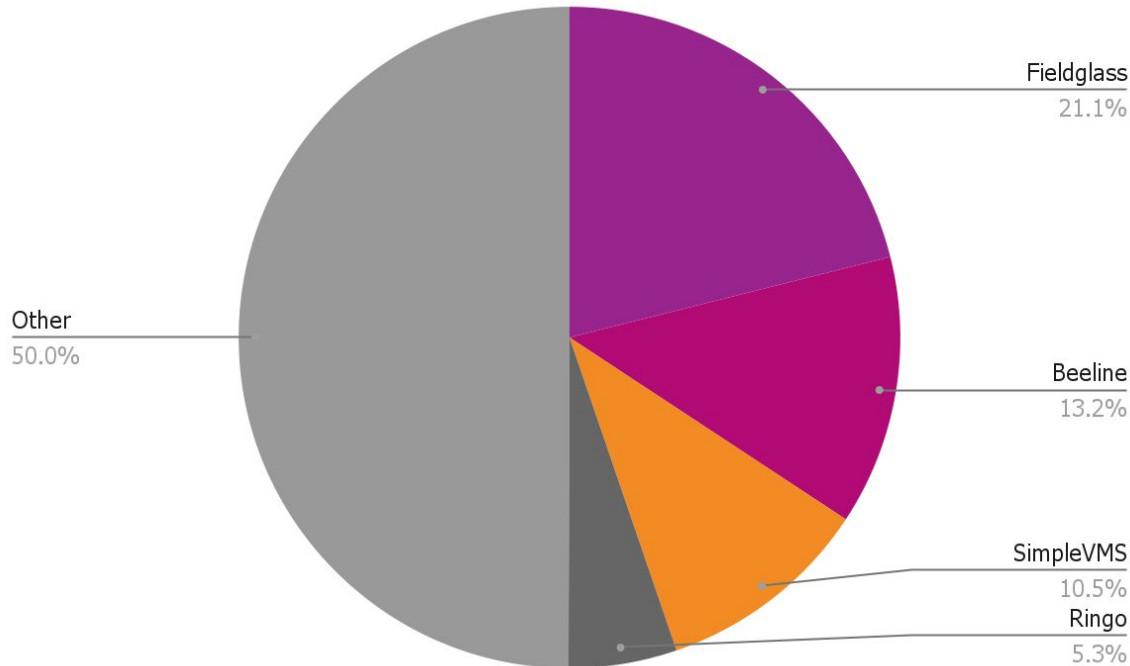
Does your agency use a vendor management system (VMS) to support one or more of your clients?



More than half of agencies in legal (**71%**), clinical / scientific (**62%**), and creative / marketing (**53%**) report using a VMS to support one or more of their clients.

Fieldglass and Beeline are the top VMS solutions

Which vendor management system (VMS) do you use?

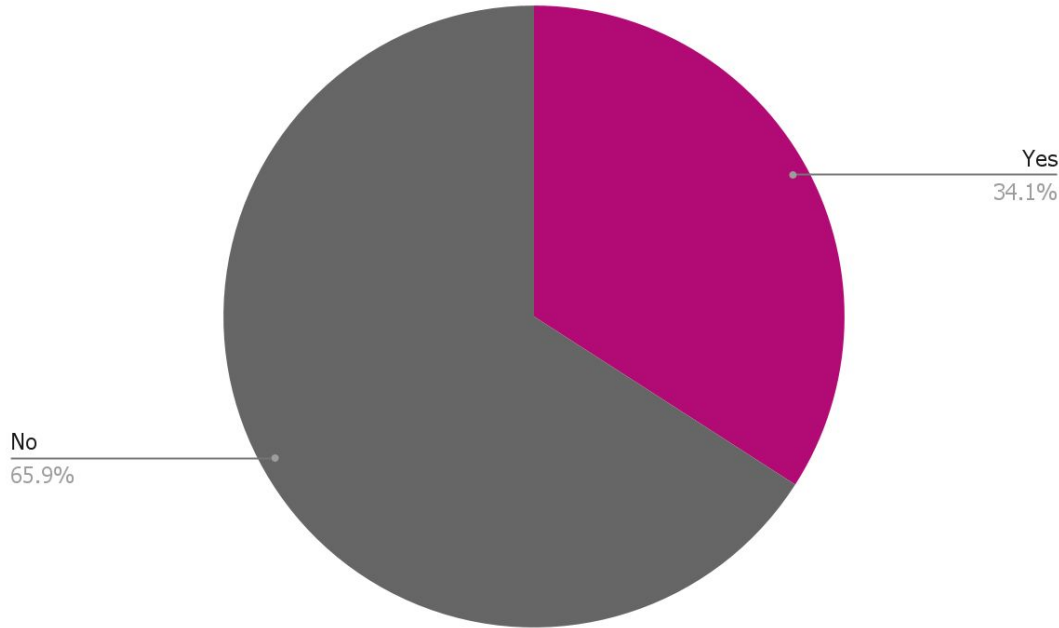


Among companies that use a VMS, **Fieldglass** was the top system (**21%**), followed by **Beeline** (**13%**), and **SimpleVMS** (**11%**).

Some agencies reported using two or more of these solutions simultaneously.

1 in 3 VMS users are integrated

Do you have an integration between your VMS and your internal systems (ATS, back office, etc.)?



About a third of respondents (**34%**) who use a VMS have integrated their VMS with their internal systems.

This is an increase from **24%** in 2024.





Speedy placements, zero paperwork headaches.

Hire faster

Complete remote I-9s in 10 minutes, no admin required.

Stay compliant

Prevent errors with built-in validation and automatic fixes.

Scale efficiently

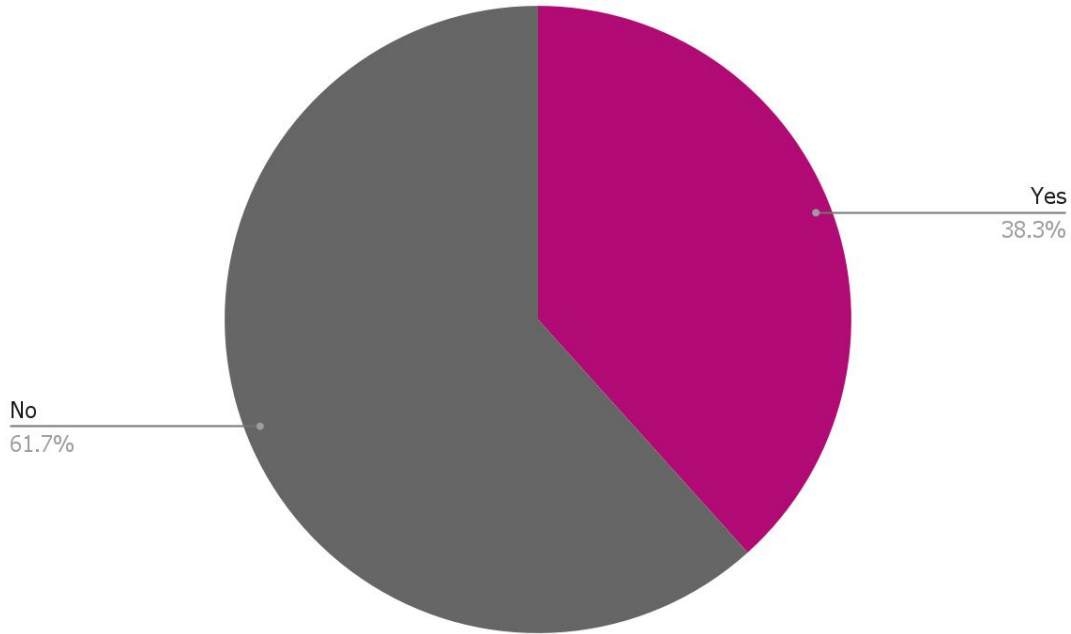
Process more hires without increasing admin workload.



[Learn more](#)

More agencies provide a candidate mobile app

Does your company provide a mobile app for candidates?

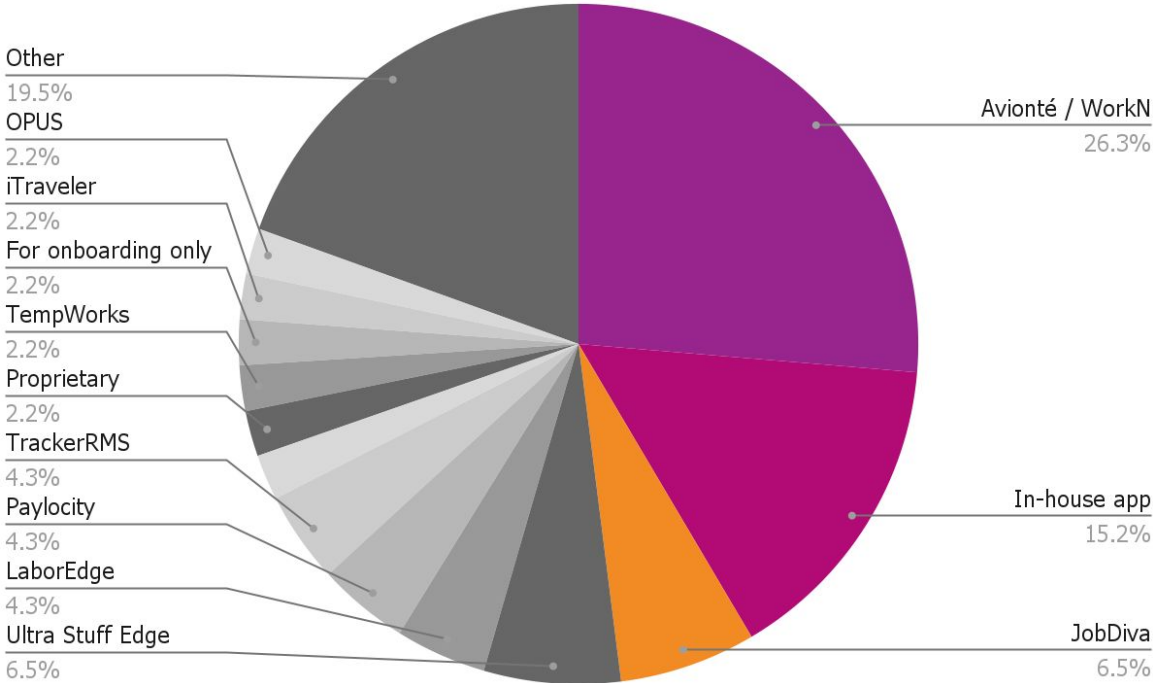


Nearly four in 10 respondents (**38%**) said they provide a mobile app for candidates, up from **35%** in 2024.

Half of the **fastest-growing agencies (50%)** said they had a candidate mobile app.

Avionté is the top mobile app provider

Which mobile app provider do you use?

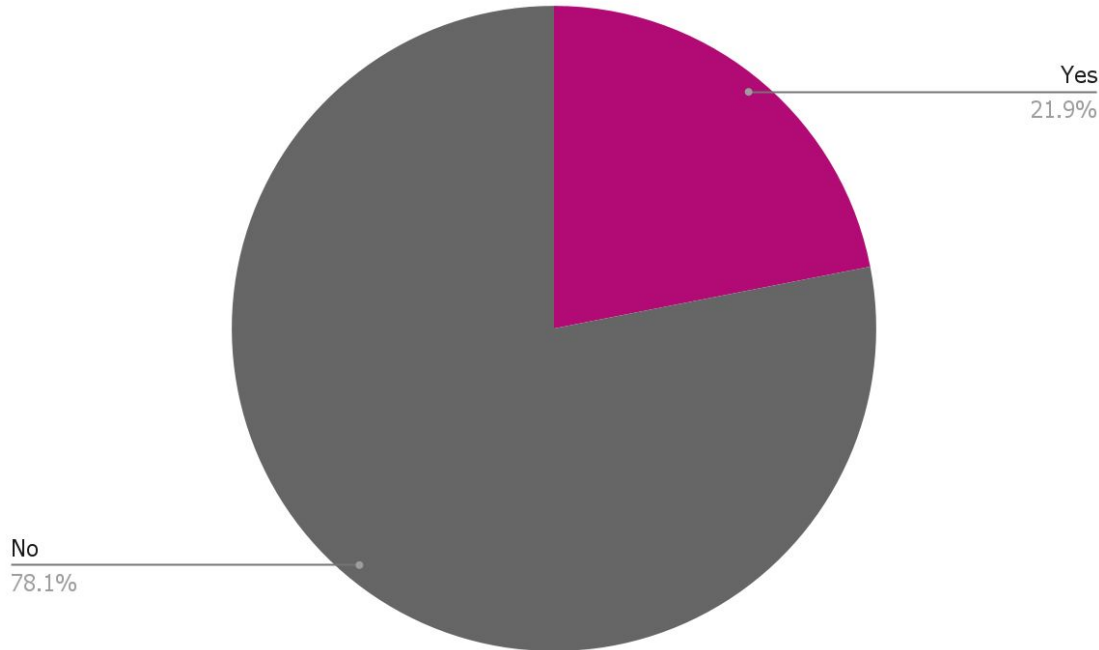


Agencies commonly use **Avionté (26%)** to provide a mobile app to candidates or their own in-house app (**15%**).



1 in 5 agencies use an outside job board vendor

Does your company partner with an outside vendor to manage the job board on your website?

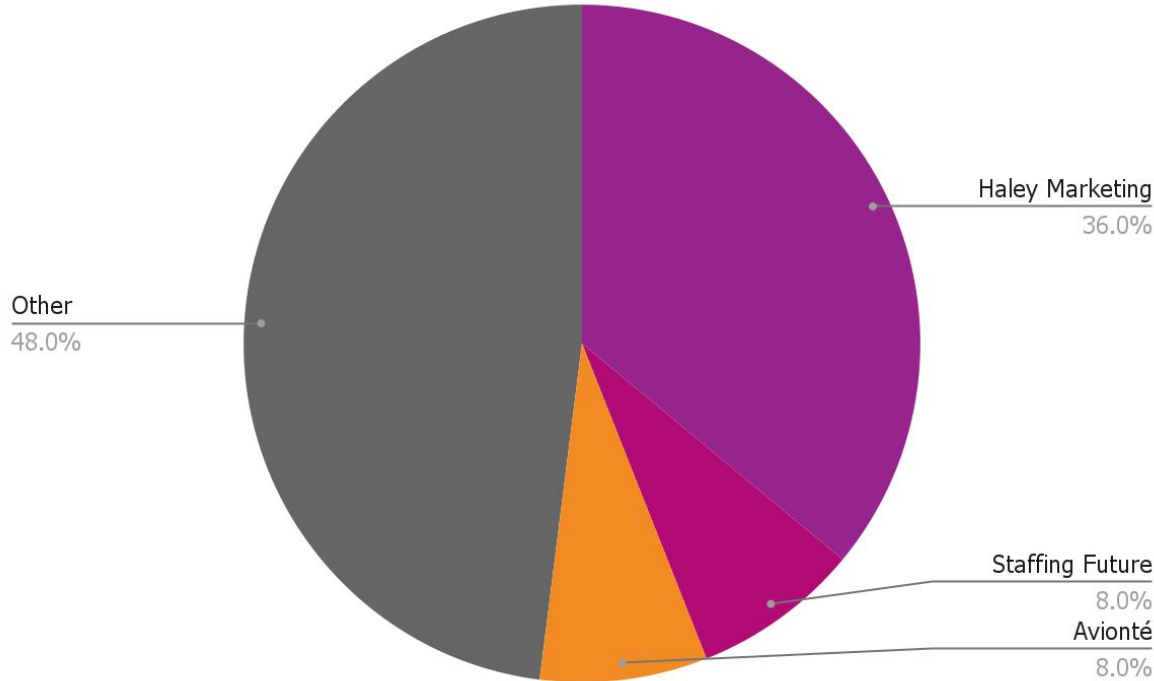


Roughly one in five agencies (**22%**) said they partner with an outside vendor to manage their website's job board

7% of the **fastest-growing agencies** reported using an outside vendor for this purpose.

Haley Marketing is most adopted job board partner

Which job board vendor do you partner with?

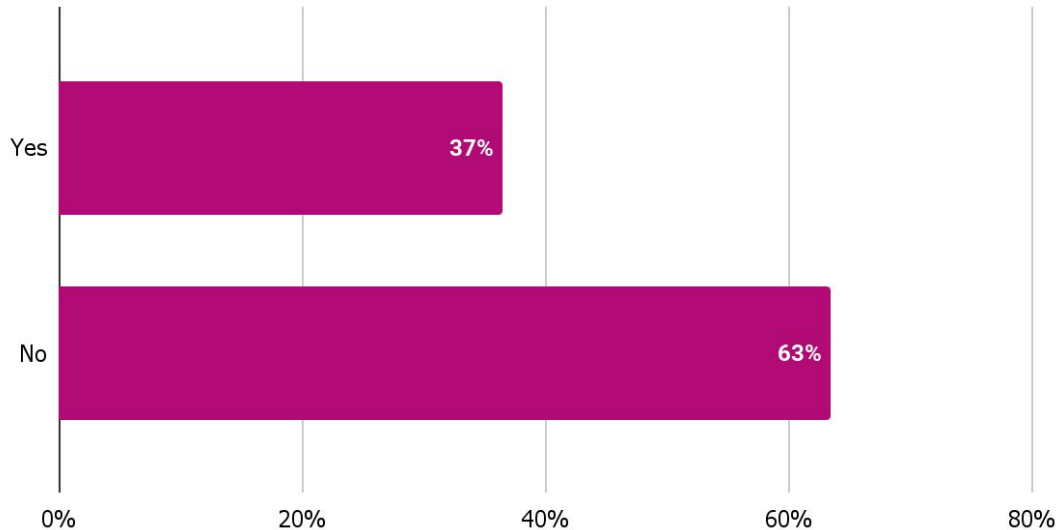


Agencies that do use an outside vendor most commonly partner with **Haley Marketing (36%)**, followed by **Staffing Future (8%)** and **Avionté (8%)**.



Fast-growth agencies prioritize software purchases

Are you planning to purchase new software solutions for your agency in the next 12 months?

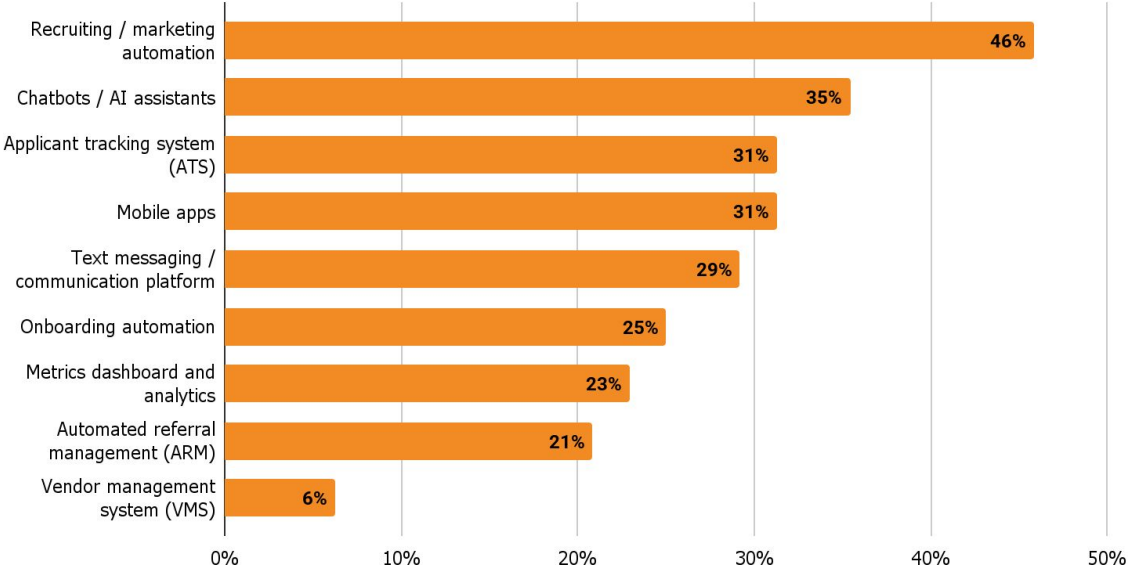


Within the next 12 months, **37%** of agencies plan to buy new software solutions, down from **45%** in 2024. However, that percentage nearly doubles (**62%**) for the **fastest-growing agencies**.

When asked to rate the challenge level of technology initiatives on a scale of 1 (not challenging) to 5 (extremely challenging), managing recruiting automation, integrations, and selecting the right tools tied for the top spot.

Recruiting / marketing automation leads software purchase plans

If you're planning to purchase new software solutions in the next 12 months, which category are you considering?



Agencies planning to purchase software are most interested in recruiting / marketing automation (**46%**) and chatbots / AI assistants (**35%**).

Fast-growth agencies are more likely to consider adopting all of these technologies.



*By **embracing technology and data-driven insights**, we'll streamline processes and enhance candidate experiences, positioning us as a trusted partner for organizations navigating change.*

Together, we'll shape the future of recruitment in a dynamic economy.

~ Survey response

2025 STATE *of* STAFFING

Authors

Krystle Morrison and the
StaffingHub Team

Methodology

In January of 2025, StaffingHub surveyed 328 staffing professionals. Their responses are the basis of this report. A short pulse survey was also conducted in April 2025.

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