

HOW TO BUY AN ATS GUIDE

EDITION 09/2025

**PRO
GUIDE**



A PRACTICAL GUIDE **FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM**

talent *adore*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO BUY AN ATS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....3

THE ATS BUYING PROCESS.....5

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS.....7

STEP 2: BUDGETING AND STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN.....11

STEP 3: IDENTIFY MUST HAVES.....14

STEP 4: BUILD YOUR LONG AND SHORTLIST.....17

STEP 5: CONDUCT DEMOS AND TRIALS.....19

STEP 6: REQUEST OFFERS....23

STEP 7: FINAL SELECTION.....25

EXPERT INSIGHTS.....29

JOHNNY CAMPBELL.....30

JOHN SAGRELIUS.....32

SAANA ROSSI.....34

JACCO VALKENBURG.....36

KERSTI VANNAS.....38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Choosing the right Applicant Tracking System (ATS) can transform your talent acquisition function, but the process is often complex, high-stakes, and easy to misjudge. This guide, **“How to Buy an ATS – Hear From 5 Global HR Influencers,”** is designed to help HR, talent acquisition, and business leaders navigate the journey with clarity and confidence.

We walk you through every phase of the ATS buying process - from identifying business needs and mapping must-have features to demo best practices, offer negotiation, and feature-by-feature comparison.

To elevate this guide beyond generic checklists, we’ve spoken with **five globally respected HR influencers:**

- Johnny Campbell, UK
- Saana Rossi, Finland
- John Sagrelus, Sweden
- Jacco Valkenburg, Netherlands
- Kersti Vannas, Estonia

They bring decades of frontline hiring and technology selection experience. Their insights answer the biggest strategic questions buyers face:

- What’s the most important factor to consider when choosing an ATS?
- Which features truly drive recruitment efficiency and employer brand?
- How can companies balance efficiency with great candidate experience?
- What integrations matter most in today’s HR tech ecosystem?
- And which considerations and hidden costs are most often overlooked?

Whether you’re selecting your first ATS or replacing an outdated system, this guide will help you move forward with clarity, confidence, and a well-informed decision.

FIVE HR AND RECRUITMENT EXPERTS FROM FIVE COUNTRIES



KERSTI VANNAS
FOUNDER | INSTAR TALENT



JOHNNY CAMPBELL
CEO | SOCIALTALENT



SAANA ROSSI
HR INFLUENCER, SPEAKER



JACCO VALKENBURG
RECRUITMENT EXPERT,
AUTHOR, TRAINER



JOHN SAGRELIUS
CONSULTANT, CO-FOUNDER
| NORTHBOUND

THE ATS BUYING PROCESS

1. DEFINE BUSINESS NEEDS

2. BUDGET AND STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

3. IDENTIFY MUST-HAVES AND NICE-TO-HAVES

4. BUILD YOUR LONG AND SHORTLIST

5. CONDUCT DEMO AND TRIALS

6. REQUEST OFFERS

7. FINAL SELECTION

A woman with long dark hair and round glasses is sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen with a smile. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent red overlay. In the background, there is a bookshelf filled with books and a potted plant on the left. The text 'BEFORE THE DEMO' is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the image.

BEFORE THE DEMO

Step 01

BEFORE THE DEMO

DEFINE YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS



To make a cost-effective, long-term software investment, you need to plan beyond your current needs. Understanding your company's strategic direction and growth plans is essential — where does your **5-year business plan** anticipate you'll be, and how will that impact talent acquisition?

“A study by Freshworks indicated that **inadequate workplace technology** causes nearly half (49%) of employees surveyed to feel stressed and 48% claim it has negatively impacted their mental health.”



Step 01

DEFINE BUSINESS NEEDS: ANSWER THESE CORE QUESTIONS

BEFORE THE DEMO

1. What are the biggest challenges in your recruitment? Write down the main challenges you face in your recruitment to get a clearer view of the problems your next recruitment software should help you solve.

2. What is your recruitment process like? Carefully map out your current recruitment processes to identify areas where technology could or should help you streamline them.

3. What is the structure of your HR/Talent Acquisition teams? Whether you're a one-person HR team handling all people functions or part of an organization with dedicated talent acquisition specialists, your team structure directly shapes your ATS requirements.

4. How involved are hiring managers in the recruitment process? In most cases, it's not the recruiter, but the hiring manager, who has the final say. Understanding the degree to which your hiring managers participates is a key factor in determining your ATS needs.

5. What types of roles do you have in your organization? Different roles and job functions have differing needs for recruitment, from recruitment marketing to screening practices.

6. What have your recruitment volumes historically been, and how big is your employee turnover? Analyze your annual recruitment numbers, how they're distributed across departments, and what drives your hiring needs.

7. Do you use external recruitment partners? If you rely heavily on agencies for recruitment, acquiring an ATS has a big effect. Will the external consultants be using your recruitment platform or their own software?

8. What are your requirements for data security, access, and reporting? Define your needs for data protection (like GDPR), user access levels, and reporting capabilities to ensure compliance and secure, data-driven decision-making.

Step 01

DEFINE BUSINESS NEEDS: SCALING FOR FUTURE NEEDS

BEFORE THE DEMO

Large investments or change management looming on the horizon can have a huge impact on the requirements. In the case of rapid growth, it is important that the ATS you ultimately choose scales with your needs. If you are an international organization or expanding abroad in the future, you need to evaluate if the ATS is capable of taking those growth steps with you.

Understanding the company's strategy also helps you evaluate what contract terms are acceptable or beneficial. Getting a clear picture of where your company is heading and what it needs right now is also essential for the next phase: budgeting and building your business case.



Analyzing your current situation is only the first step—you also need to evaluate how your recruitment needs will scale with your business.

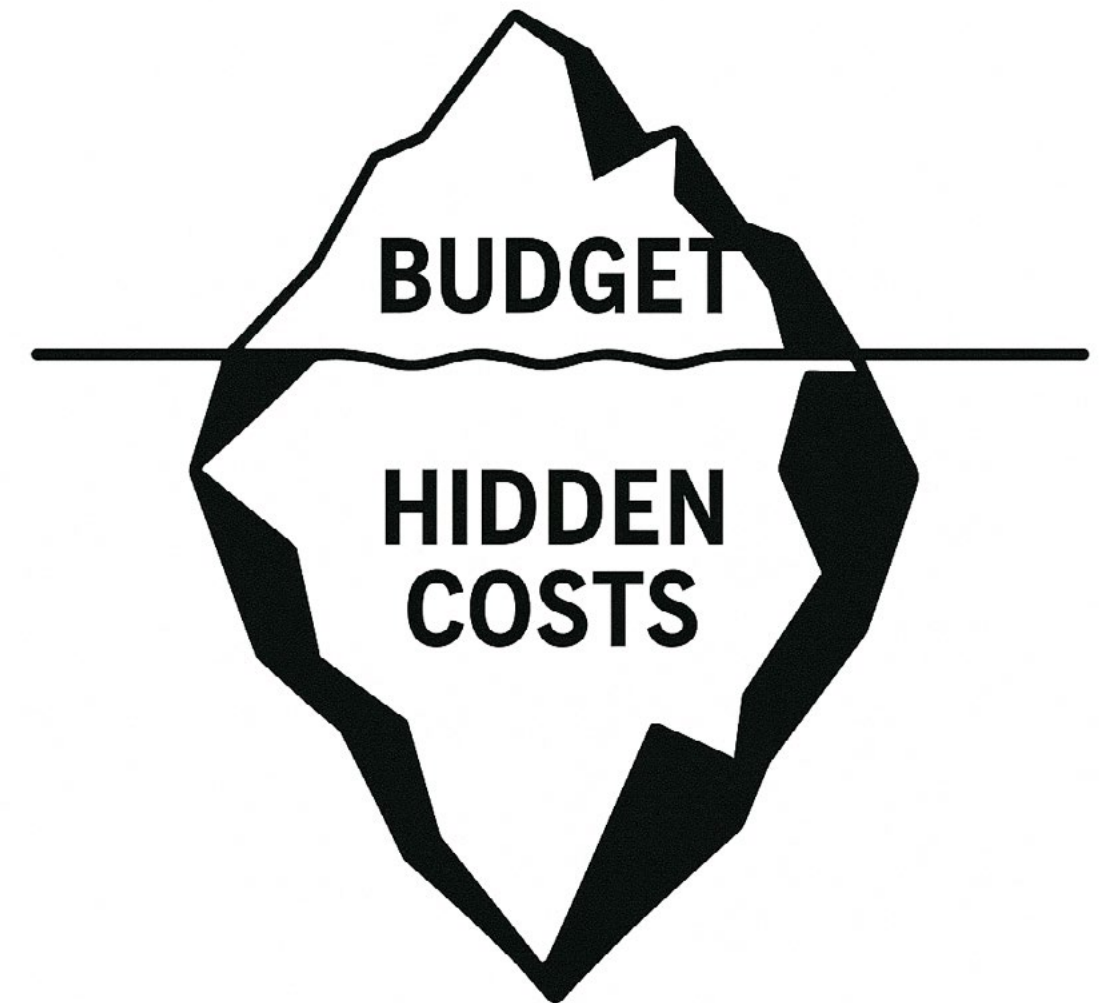
Step 02 **BUDGETING & STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN**

BEFORE THE DEMO

When you start pitching the acquisition of any new software to your higher-ups, the first thing you most likely hear is: “**How much will it cost?**”

If you want to ensure the ATS acquisition comes back from the C-suite with a stamp of approval, you need to build “the three Bs”: **budget, business case and stakeholder buy-in.**

Start with budget research. Before requesting quotes or demos, research the general price range of recruitment platforms through online resources and your professional network.



Step 02 **BUDGETING & BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS CASE**

BEFORE THE DEMO

When developing your initial budget estimates, **don't forget to factor in:**

- Potential onboarding fees and data migration costs
- Usage overlaps with your current ATS
- Integration costs for existing tools like assessment platforms or HR software
- Internal workload for data cleanup, user training, system configuration, and ongoing administration

With your budget estimate in place, it's time to build the business case. Based on the analysis you conducted of the company's business needs, state of recruitment, and future outlook, clearly define the benefits of acquiring an applicant tracking system. Include in detail why the current setup might be a blocker in achieving your targets and cost-effectiveness.

An effective way to convince the C-suite is to present the opportunity cost, or the cost of doing nothing: by painting a picture of why going a different route or standing pat might yield negative results, you can drive home the impact of investing in a modern ATS.

Especially in larger corporations, you need to be mindful of including multiple stakeholders in the acquisition process. Nothing is more deflating than going through a thorough tendering process, only to find yourself back at square one, because you didn't include a stakeholder early on. Potential stakeholders to include before advancing with the process are:

- **IT and Infosec teams**
- **Legal**
- **Finance**
- **Recruiters & hiring managers**

And if you are in a decision-making role, don't forget your direct team. A study by Freshworks indicated that inadequate workplace technology causes nearly half (49%) of employees surveyed to feel stressed and 48% claim it has negatively impacted their mental health.

By including your team, you can prevent similar frustration and get valuable insights from those who will actually use the ATS on a daily basis.

“Before you ask what a system can do, **define what you need it to do.** Technology should follow strategy, not define it.”



Step 03

IDENTIFY-MUST-HAVES (*AND NICE-TO-HAVES*)

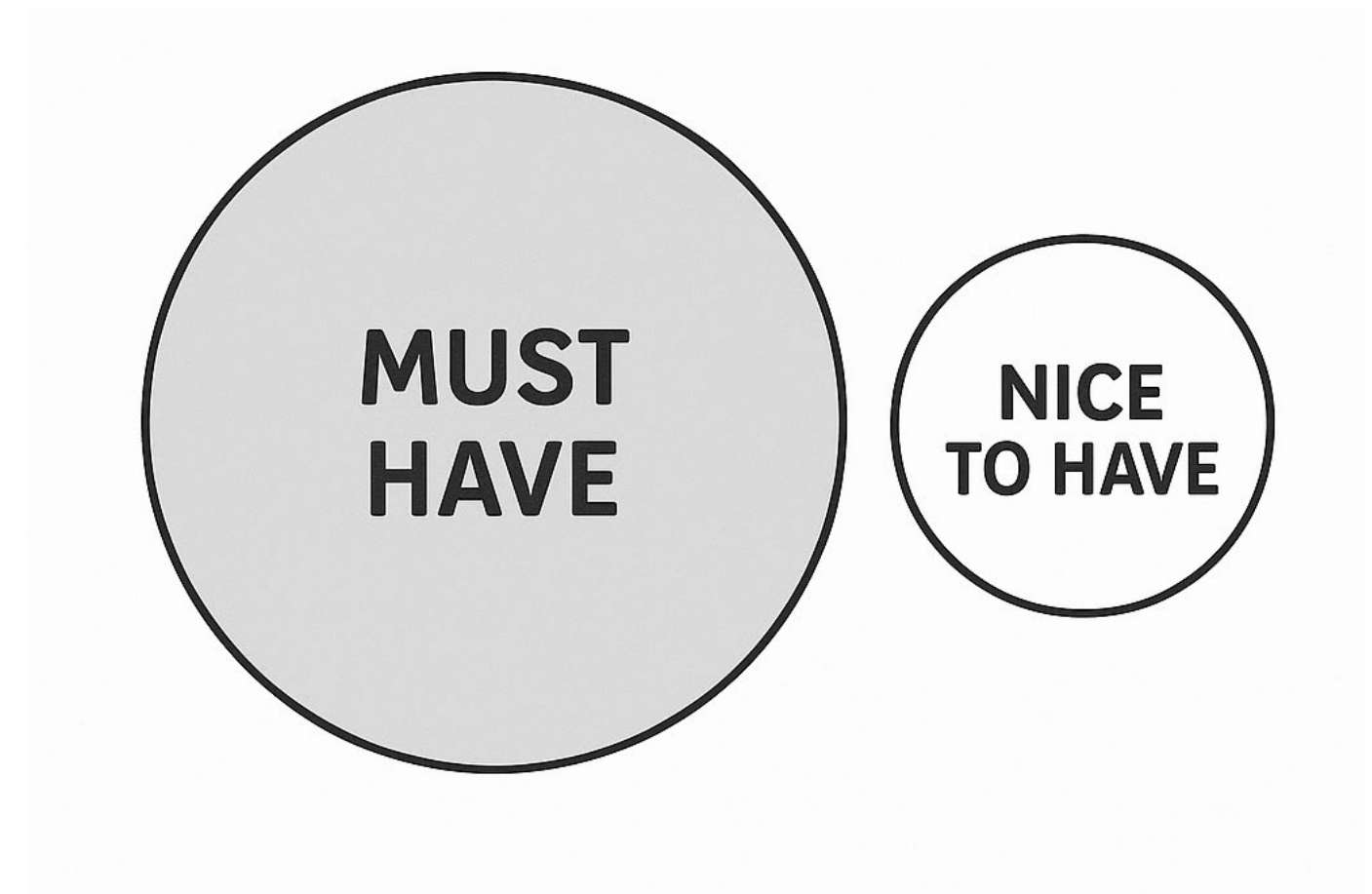
BEFORE THE DEMO

List your must-haves. These are the features and capabilities your team simply can't function without. It might be structured workflows, strong search, local compliance, or integrations with your HRIS. Without these, the system won't work for you—no matter how slick it looks.

Then, put down your nice-to-haves. These are features that would add value but aren't essential from day one. Think AI suggestions, text campaigns, or video interview tools. Helpful? Absolutely. Dealbreakers? Probably not.

Having this list makes everything easier—from shortlisting vendors to negotiating offers. It also keeps you grounded during demos so you don't get dazzled by features that look cool but don't solve your real problems.

Remember: Consider both now and the future. Your needs will evolve. A feature that is a 'nice-to-have' today, like advanced analytics or AI capabilities, could become a 'must-have' tomorrow as you scale. Your chosen ATS should not only solve today's problems but also be ready to grow with you.



Step 03

FEATURES LIST

JOB ADS AND RECRUITMENT MARKETING

Potential “must-haves”:

- Job ad editor and job ad templates
- Multi-language support
- Automated publishing of job ads to your career pages
- Basic integrations to the needed job portals and social media channels
- Mobile-friendly and responsive application forms

Potential “nice-to-haves”:

- Advanced integrations: ability to launch and buy recruitment marketing campaigns inside the ATS
- Customizable application forms
- Knock-out questions and automations for appli-

- cation forms
- Career page builder
- Internal and hidden job ads

SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING

Potential “must-haves”:

- Customizable recruitment flows and templates
- Advanced filtering options
- Notepads
- Evaluation tools
- Interview booking (face-to-face, online and group interviews)
- Integrations to the most common calendars (e.g., Outlook, Gmail)

Potential “nice-to-haves”:

- Video interview tools

- Customizable automations
- Different views, e.g., kanban and list view
- Two-way calendar synchronization
- Candidate introductions
- Integrations to assessment tools (e.g., personality assessments and digital reference checking)

CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Potential “must-haves”:

- Customizable recruitment flows and templates
- Interview booking with integrations to the most common calendars (e.g., Outlook, Gmail)
- Built-in email and SMS messaging

Potential “nice-to-haves”:

- Two-way calendar synchronization

- Customizable automations

TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT

Potential “must-haves”:

- Talent community for future needs
- Advanced search and grouping options
- Maintain and store data according to GDPR.

Potential “nice-to-haves”:

- Job alerts
- Automated communication
- Referrals

CONFIGURATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Potential “must-haves”:

- Customizable user roles and views
- Customer support & user trainings
- Extensive knowledge base
- Multiple company profiles (e.g., country profiles, regional profiles, subsidiaries, etc.)
- Integration to your HRIS & Payroll system

Potential “nice-to-haves”:

- Early access to beta features
- Chatbot 24/7 support

AI CAPABILITIES

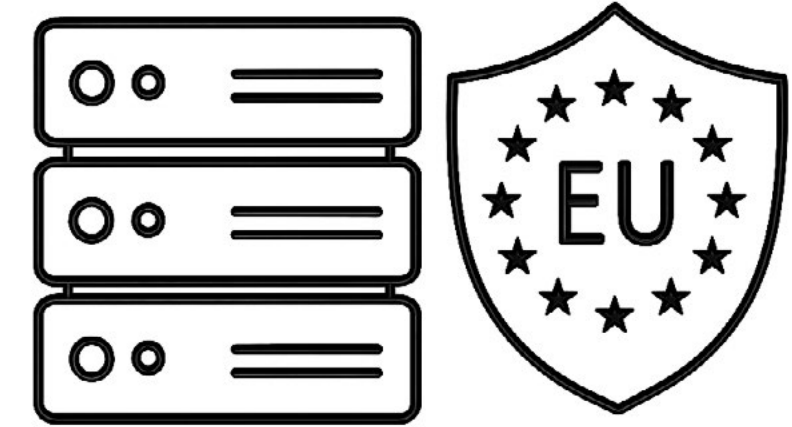
Artificial intelligence (AI) has been revolutionizing how we use and approach software. Analyzing your ATS provider’s AI vision and capabilities is an essential part of future-proofing your software acquisition. Some essential and more **advanced AI features** for recruitment include:

- AI Matching
- AI-assisted candidate communication
- AI-generated summaries
- AI-powered search
- AI Notetaker
- AI-generated job ads and translations
- AI Support Agents

Don’t forget data security

Recruitment involves dealing with sensitive personal information. A data-secure ATS is a must, whether you operate in the EMEA and are required to adhere to GDPR or not. When comparing different ATS providers, be on the lookout for how the vendor addresses information security. Crucially, you should also verify where the data is stored and whether it is transferred outside of the EU. Having any certifications, such as the **ISO 27001**, is an indication of a strong commitment to data security.

Step 03 **DATA SECURITY**



Data Security in AI Recruiting

When your ATS uses AI, its data security model is crucial. The approach your vendor takes determines your compliance and risk.

The Two AI Models:

1. **Outsourced Processing:** Many vendors send your data to public AI services. This creates significant risks: you lose data control, face potential GDPR/EU AI Act violations, and are exposed to third-party breaches.
2. **Private Processing:** A secure model where AI analysis occurs within the vendor's own private system. This ensures data sovereignty, meets compliance by design, and guarantees your data is deleted after use.

Your Responsibility

As the data controller, you are ultimately responsible for safeguarding candidate data. Scrutinize your vendor's AI to ensure security.

- **Data Flow:** Verify that data remains within the vendor's control and inside the EU.
- **Compliance:** Confirm the architecture meets GDPR/EU AI Act standards.
- **Liability:** Clarify responsibility for any third-party breaches.

Step 04 **BUILD YOUR LONG & SHORT LISTS**

BEFORE THE DEMO

Once you know what your requirements are, it's time to start building a list of potential ATS vendors. And what better way to approach this step, than borrowing a page from the headhunting playbook: **short-listing and long-listing!**



With so many potential partners on the market, you won't have time to have demos with all of them. By starting out with a long-list and then stripping that list down to a short-list you get an extensive look on what is on the market and ensure only those most qualified end up on the discussion stage. During the process you can jot down any essential questions you need to ask from the vendors during the demo phase.

Before you start scheduling demos with your short-listed candidates, don't forget to take another page from the recruitment 101 guide: reference checking. Use your personal network to inquire about their experiences of different recruitment softwares and scan the website's of ATS providers for relevant references and customer stories. Look for those from your company's industry and size in particular.

There are several sites where you can compare ATS vendors such as **G2, Capterra and Businesswith.**



A woman with long dark hair and round glasses is seated at a desk. She is wearing a light-colored cardigan over a dark top and a watch on her left wrist. She holds a large sheet of paper in her right hand and a pen in her left. The background is a blurred office setting. The text "THE DEMO STAGE" is overlaid in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the image.

THE DEMO STAGE

Step 05

THE DEMO STAGE

CONDUCT DEMOS & TRIALS

Before the demo, take 15 minutes to prepare. The better prepared you are, the more you'll get out of it. Your goal is to see if the product fits your ways of working, supports your team, and improves the candidate experience. Good prep ensures the demo highlights what matters to you—not just another sales pitch.

Start by revisiting your processes. Write down real-life scenarios and talk to recruiters and stakeholders about what they want to see. Make a list. You're buying a tool to support your people—make sure it does. Focus on outcomes, not flashy UIs. Slick design doesn't mean it gets the job done. Flexibility and multiple ways to reach the same result often signal strong software.

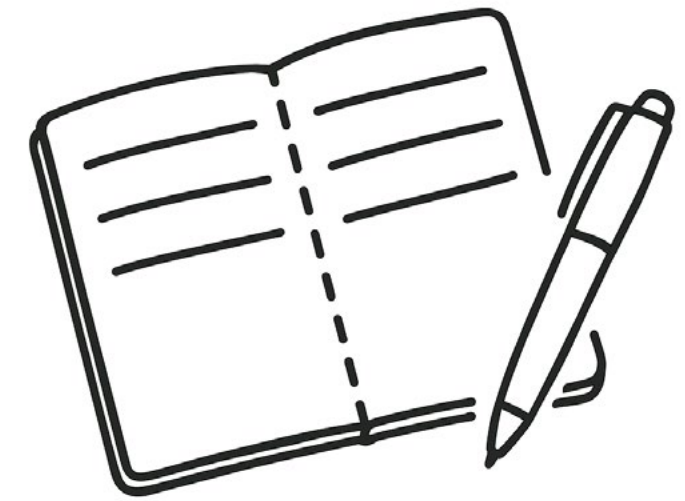
During the demo, stay active. Don't just watch—interact. Ask them to walk through your scenarios, not just their script. Take notes, flag unclear points, and see how it handles both everyday tasks and edge cases. Ask “why” and “why not?” Why does a feature work this way? Can it be done differently? What if someone applies late or reschedules?



“During the demo, **stay active**. Don’t just watch — interact. Ask them to walk through your scenarios, not just their script.”



9 KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE DEMO



1. Does the ATS support your current recruitment processes?
2. How well does the system handle high-volume candidate screening?
3. How does it handle integrations with tools you already use?
4. Can workflows be customized without heavy IT support?
5. How intuitive is it for hiring managers with minimal training?
6. What reporting and analytics capabilities are built in?
7. Can we get a trial or sandbox account to explore the product ourselves?
8. Does the system support the candidate experience, incl. feedback for applicants?
9. How does the vendor ensure data security and responsible use of AI?

A man with short, dark hair and a light beard is sitting at a desk, focused on his work. He is wearing a dark, short-sleeved shirt. His hands are on a laptop, which is open in front of him. The background is a bright, modern office space with large windows and a potted plant. The overall tone is professional and productive.

THE OFFER

REQUESTING THE OFFER

When requesting your ATS offer, it's essential to understand precisely what you're getting into. Take your time to look through the details carefully. Doing so can help you avoid unexpected costs or issues down the road. Here's a clear breakdown of what to look for in an ATS offer.

BREAKDOWN OF COSTS

Licensing and User Fees

Ask for a transparent overview of all licensing costs and user fees associated with the product. It's crucial to understand these costs thoroughly to prevent hidden charges that could surface later in your investment.

Typical licence fee models can be:

- Pay per user per month
- Flat monthly or annual rate (based on company size)
- Per recruitments or job openings
- Modular pricing based on features

Implementation and Setup

Investigate thoroughly all expenses related to implementation and setup. This includes costs for installation, configuration and any necessary on-boarding services if those are not included.

INTEGRATIONS AND ADD-ONS

Key Integrations

Does the ATS integrate with essential tools such as HR-system, job boards and various other platforms. Be alert about any additional costs that may arise for using these integrations. Are there any optional modules available outside the standard package?



Step 06

REQUESTING THE OFFER

DATA AND ANALYTICS

Analytics Capabilities

Make sure the analytics and reporting features come as part of the standard package or if they incur extra charges. These capabilities are vital for leveraging data to make informed hiring decisions and monitor recruitment metrics effectively.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Product Updates

Clarify the approach to product updates and the rollout of new features. Establish whether updates are automatic, thus minimizing disruption, or if user action is needed to implement enhancements.

COMPLIANCE AND LEGAL

THE OFFER

Responsibility and Liability

Be sure to understand compliance responsibilities and accountability in the event of a data breach or legal disputes. Knowing who is liable will provide peace of mind as you navigate through the complexities of hiring.

SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Support Model

Investigate the support infrastructure provided by the vendor. What kind of assistance can you expect? Will you have access to a dedicated support representative or a customer engagement manager? Additionally, inquire about their response times and availability to ensure timely assistance when needed.

CONTRACT TERMS

Contract Duration

Review the specific terms of the contract period, including the conditions surrounding cancellation. Understanding any penalties or obligations will help you make a well-informed commitment. Also, don't forget to check for the availability of trial periods or satisfaction guarantees, which can provide you with the opportunity to test the service before fully committing.

Step 07 **FINAL SELECTIONS**

THE OFFER

You're at the finish line — now choose with confidence.

✅ **Compare offers beyond price:**

Look at total value — support, onboarding, training, and long-term scalability.

✅ **Revisit your must-haves:**

Which solution best meets your core needs and adapts as you grow?

✅ **Involve your users:**

Include input from recruiters, hiring managers, and IT — they'll live with the tool daily.

✅ **Assess the partnership:**

Is the vendor responsive, transparent, and invested in your success?

✅ **Plan the rollout:**

A smooth implementation is just as critical as the tool itself.

✅ **Evaluate long-term value and risk:**

Does the vendor reduce your exposure? How future-proof is the solution as your needs evolve over time?

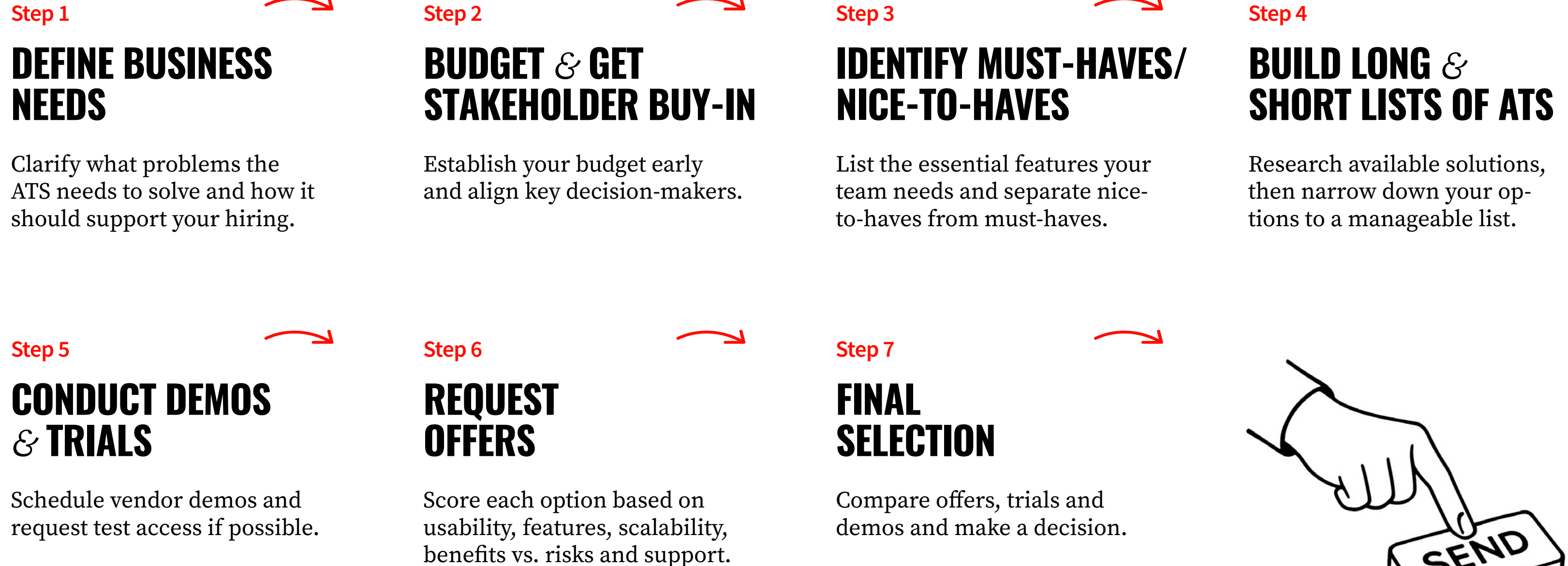
Choose the platform that supports both efficiency and exceptional candidate experience.



“The best choice balances the **Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)** against the benefits gained from the platform, such as efficiency, support, and boost to your employer brand.”



COMPLETE BUYING PROCESS





OUR EXPERTS

EXPERT INSIGHTS

To bring a global perspective to this guide, we spoke with five seasoned HR and **talent acquisition leaders from across Europe** — including the UK, Finland, Sweden, Estonia and the Netherlands.

These experts have led hiring strategies at scale, evaluated numerous ATS platforms, and built high-performing recruitment processes in diverse markets.

Their insights, grounded in real-world experience, offer practical guidance to help you make confident, informed decisions throughout your ATS buying journey.



JOHNNY CAMPBELL
CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF SOCIALTALENT



What is the single most important factor to consider when choosing an ATS? Why?

The most important factor when choosing an ATS? Fit.

Not just with your hiring volume or budget, but with how your people actually hire. Too often, organizations buy the system that looks best in a demo, then spend years bending their hiring culture to fit the tool. It should be the other way around.

Ask: Does it support how your recruiters, hiring managers, and interviewers really work? Does it nudge them toward better practices—structured interviewing, DEI alignment, candidate transparency? Does it integrate with the tools you already use?

Tech won't fix broken hiring, but the right ATS can amplify what's already working—and surface what's not.

JOHNNY CAMPBELL

CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF SOCIALTALENT

United Kingdom 🇬🇧

Johnny is the co-founder and **CEO of SocialTalent**, a leading learning platform for hiring and talent development. Based in Dublin and known across the UK and Europe, he is a respected voice in recruitment innovation, talent strategy, and skills-first hiring.

Johnny brings decades of experience working with global TA teams to modernize hiring through training, technology, and process design.



JOHN SAGRELIUS
CO-FOUNDER AT NORTHBOUND, TALENT STRATEGY & HR-TECH ADVISOR



Which ATS integrations are crucial for building an effective recruitment ecosystem?

“The most important thing when it comes to integrations is to start with your recruitment challenges. Identify your bottlenecks and time-wasters — then focus on the integrations that deliver the best ROI.

Three tips for building a clever integration ecosystem:

1. The right job boards and ad channels.

They may seem basic, but they’re essential if you do a lot of job advertising. Just make sure to review your channel strategy regularly.

2. Assessment and selection tests.

For now, tests are still the most effective way to screen candidates in high-volume hiring or when applicants lack much work experience.

3. Open APIS.

These give you the flexibility to connect your tools or HR systems.

You don’t need to build your ecosystem all at once. It’s smarter to add functionality gradually, as long as it actually delivers value.

In the end, what makes your ATS a successful choice is whether it solves your company’s and your managers’ talent needs.”

JOHN SAGRELIUS

CO-FOUNDER AT NORTHBOUND, TALENT STRATEGY & HR-TECH ADVISOR

Sweden 🇸🇪

John is the **co-founder of Northbound** and a **leading consultant in the Nordic region** on talent strategy, workforce planning, and HR technology. With over 20 years of leadership experience and a decade specializing in HR, TA, and L&D, he supports organizations in aligning their talent strategies with business goals. John's expertise spans strategic workforce planning, talent intelligence, and the implementation of AI-driven solutions.

He works hands-on with clients to future-proof their workforce, helping companies identify critical skills, close capability gaps, and drive change through scalable, tech-enabled solutions. A strong advocate for skills-based organizations, John also serves as a moderator and advisor in the HR-tech space.



SAANA ROSSI
SPEAKER, AUTHOR, ADVISOR

“

What are the most important features in an ATS?

“The key features of an ATS are ease of use, smooth candidate management, communication features, and the utilization of analytics and reporting.

Effective candidate management is essential for maintaining a strong talent pool, as well as for managing the candidate experience and the internal process. A user-friendly interface enables recruiters to work efficiently, making the process agile and fast. Seamless communication ensures that candidates stay updated and engaged, which enhances their experience and positively impacts the employer brand.

Additionally, powerful analytics and reporting tools provide valuable data on key metrics, allowing recruitment strategies to be optimized and data-driven decisions to be made. These features together have streamlined the recruitment process and strengthened the employer brand by ensuring a positive candidate experience.”

SAANA ROSSI

SPEAKER, AUTHOR, ADVISOR

Finland 🇫🇮

Saana is a well-known HR influencer and keynote speaker in Finland, recognized for her authentic leadership style and progressive approach to talent acquisition. Formerly the Chief People Officer at Vincit, she now advises companies on employer branding, candidate experience, and inclusive hiring.

Saana is also the author of the book Rekrytoija (=Recruiter) and is widely followed for her human-first approach to recruitment. Furthermore, Saana was also named Recruiter of the Year at Finland's prestigious Recruitment Gala in 2018.



saana rossi

JACCO VALKENBURG
RECRUITMENT EXPERT, AUTHOR, TRAINER

“

What considerations or hidden costs are frequently overlooked when purchasing an ATS?

“Many organisations underestimate the real cost of an ATS. Not the price on the invoice, but what comes after the signature: implementation. A self-managed rollout might seem cheaper, but often leads to extra hours, unexpected delays, frustrated users, and limited adoption.

An ATS only delivers value if it fits your processes and your people. That means mapping workflows, training users, migrating data, building integrations. If you cut corners here, you’ll end up with a system that blocks progress instead of enabling it.

My advice? Look beyond demos and feature lists. Ask how implementation is handled. Will you get hands-on support or just a help centre login? Will your team be guided, or left to figure it out? A good ATS should help you hire faster and smarter. But success depends less on the tool, and more on how you roll it out.”

JACCO VALKENBURG

RECRUITMENT EXPERT, AUTHOR, TRAINER

Netherlands 🇳🇱

Jacco is a leading recruitment strategist and trainer with over 25 years of experience in talent acquisition. As the founder of Recruit2 and RecruitmentTraining.pro, he advises organisations on smarter hiring through technology, AI and data-driven processes. He has authored several books on recruitment innovation, including Recruitment 4.0 and ChatGPT voor Recruitment.

Jacco is known for making complex hiring tech practical and accessible for recruiters and HR teams across Europe.



RecruitmentTraining.pro

KERSTI VANNAS
EMPLOYER BRANDING EXPERT · KEYNOTE SPEAKER · FOUNDER & CEO OF INSTAR



How can companies balance the needs of candidates vs. the needs of recruiters?

“A strategic ATS is more than just a recruitment tool – it’s a critical support system across the entire employee lifecycle.

From first touch to onboarding, it brings structure, consistency, and a branded candidate experience that reflects your values. A well-implemented ATS connects the dots between candidate expectations, recruiter efficiency, hiring manager collaboration, and long-term employer brand impact. It also adds measurability to what was once intuitive: tracking time-to-hire, quality of hire, experience scores, and DEI. These insights optimize hiring and strengthen employer branding by ensuring consistency, accountability, and a candidate journey that matches your EVP and employer brand promise.

Ultimately, it’s not just about tracking applicants—it’s about building relationships, guiding better decisions, and creating trust at every step.”

KERSTI VANNAS

EMPLOYER BRANDING EXPERT · KEYNOTE SPEAKER · FOUNDER & CEO OF INSTAR

Estonia · Finland · Baltics 

Kersti Vannas is one of the most experienced employer branding experts in Northern and Eastern Europe, and a pioneer in the field since 2005. She is the founder and CEO of Instar, a leading employer branding agency that unites expertise in research, communication, recruitment, and strategy. With over 20 years of experience, Kersti has delivered impactful employer branding strategies for global corporations and public institutions across the Nordics, Baltics, and beyond—including Nordea, Fujitsu, Coca-Cola HBC, Lidl, and various government ministries.

Since 2010, she has led one of the region's most comprehensive annual surveys on young talent career expectations. She also drives key industry events, including Attractive Employers Day, the Attractive Employer Awards in the Baltics, and the Magnet Awards in Finland and Estonia.



“The goal of great ATS is **not to replace human connection,** but to create more time for it.”





Produced by TalentAdore

talent*adore*