The 2020 State of Recruiting Report

LEVER

Letter From the CEO

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Letter From the CEO

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed businesses in nearly every industry. And because nothing is more fundamental to a business than its people, rethinking people processes through the lens of this "new normal" is critical—from sourcing candidates and remotely interviewing them, to hiring and onboarding new employees.

Our commutes, our offices, and our day-to-day operations may never be the same again. Yet—despite the near-universal upheaval—we are buoyed by what we have learned in surveying over 700 talent leaders.

Along with negativity and fear of a faltering economy, there is optimism among recruiters:

- Only 14% of companies are on a total hiring freeze as a result of COVID-19
- During "downtime" created by hiring slowdowns and freezes, recruiters have kept busy. 37% spent time rethinking their recruiting processes, while 41% cleaned up their recruiting data
- 40% believe they'll emerge post-pandemic stronger, with better strategies and tools

Moving forward, flexibility and adaptability are key. Adaptability is a fundamental skill in all times; during the pandemic it has proven critical. From candidate sourcing unbound by geographic location, to the importance of more personalized candidate relationship management, change will come, and recruiting will transform in response.

- 84% of recruiters have leaned more heavily on phone interviews as a result of the pandemic, while 85% of them leaned more heavily on video interviews
- 62% agree they will need to hire workers with skills that weren't needed before
- 50% said D&I initiatives will become more of a priority as a result of the pandemic and as companies are proactively combating racism in the workplace
- Candidate relationship management allows companies to create and nurture relationships for future hiring needs. 71% say it's now more important that candidate relationship management be built into their applicant tracking systems
- Only 45% say they have the technology they need to build relationships with candidates

In this report, we provide a glimpse of what that transformation may look like, with the goal of empowering your own business to adapt to—and benefit from—these changes.

Keep safe and stay adaptable,

Nate Smith
Founder and CEO, Lever

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Businesses Have Instituted Hiring Freezes—But Fewer Than Expected

Even early on during the pandemic, when the very first stay-at-home orders were issued, one thing was certain: businesses were in uncharted territory. They had to act quickly to cut spending to minimize potential losses, and for 57%, that meant some form of a hiring freeze. While 14% implemented a total freeze, 43% instituted a freeze that allowed recruiters to fill specific roles and backfills.

Only

14%

of businesses were on a total hiring freeze

Hiring activity during the pandemic:

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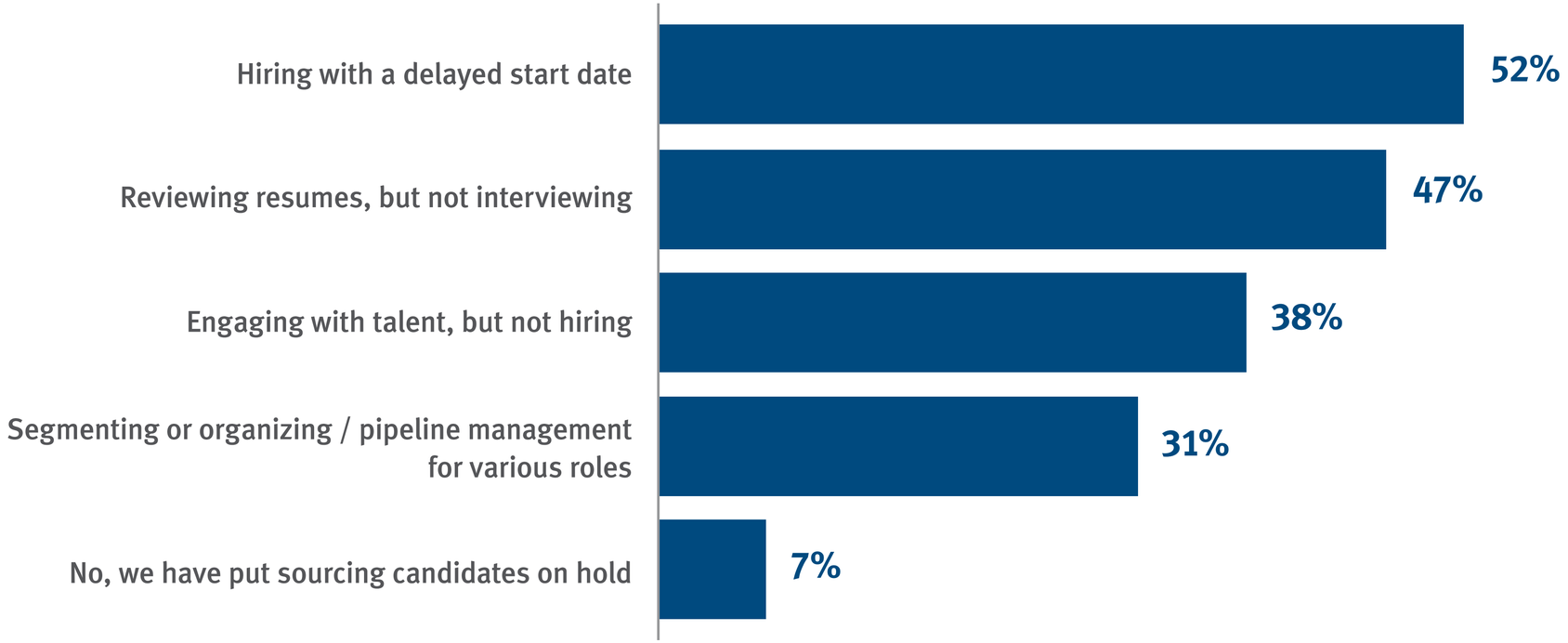
Pipeline Management Is on the Rise

Even for companies that chose to halt hiring, recruiting efforts continued—more than half were hiring with a delayed start date, while 47% of them were still reviewing resumes. This indicated their effort to have a pipeline of candidates ready once hiring resumes.

Candidate sourcing tactics during the hiring freeze:



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Strong Recruiting and Data Integrity Are a Must

For companies that did decide to fully stop recruiting efforts, there was other work to be done, and recruiters primarily spent time navigating COVID-19 related tasks. Recruiters also took the opportunity to get proactive about transforming their efforts for the future—37% spent time rethinking their recruiting processes while 41% cleaned up their recruiting data.

Top 5 ways recruiters are using their time during a hiring freeze:

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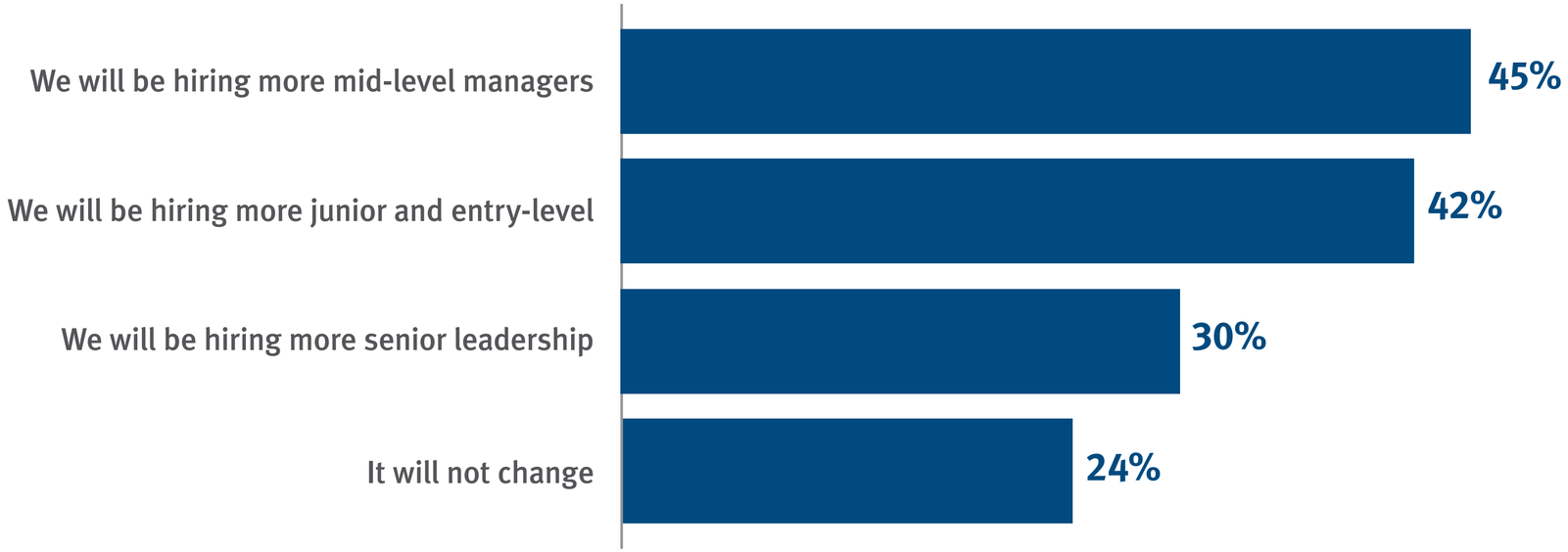
1. Senior Leadership Hiring Takes a Backseat—But Not By Much

Once freezes lift, companies will reprioritize hiring for different positions and levels.

About a third of recruiters believe their hiring freeze will last through the end of the summer, while another third estimate that it will continue through the fall.

How will your hiring priorities change as a result of COVID-19?



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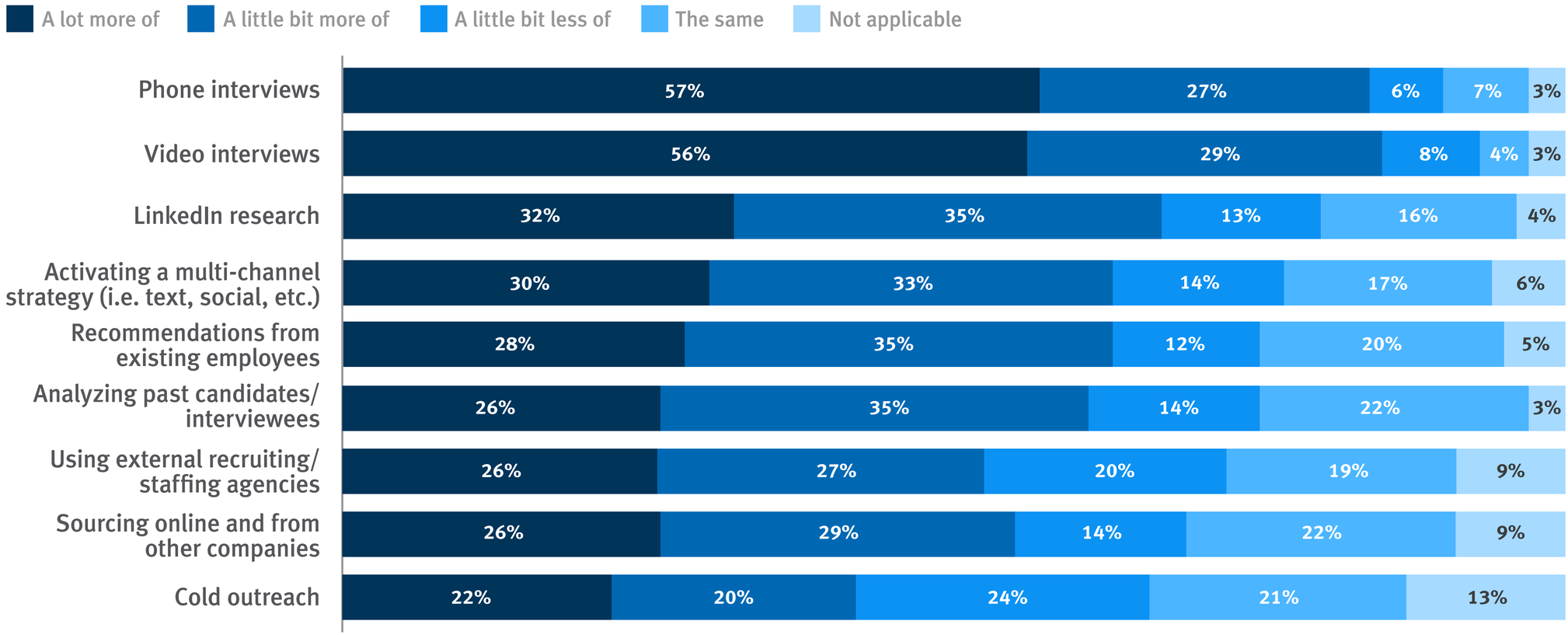
2. A Growing Reliance on Phone and Video Interviewing

In the midst of the pandemic—and even as they emerge out of it—employers will need to rethink their hiring practices to account for health risks, policy changes, and new skills requirements.

Shifts in hiring tactics used during the pandemic:



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67%

of recruiters leaned more heavily on LinkedIn research as a result of the pandemic

The pandemic did not reduce the volume of applicants that businesses were receiving—61% said they continued to receive at least as many applicants. Companies with over 1500 employees were particularly successful, with roughly 67% of recruiters saying they received at least as many applicants. And the software and technology space thrived. 68% saw at least as much interest, with 61% reporting an increase in interest.

LEVER + LinkedIn Recruiter

Looking to use LinkedIn to more effectively connect with candidates? Lever's LinkedIn Recruiter System Connect (RSC) and Apply with LinkedIn enables candidates to easily move between the LinkedIn platform and Lever, so that recruiters can toggle between platforms without doing duplicative work. With the integration, you can see important updates like candidate status, candidate history, and up-to-date LinkedIn profiles—all in one place.

Is your workforce suddenly remote? Check out Toptal's Suddenly Remote Playbook. It's your guide to sustaining an enterprise-grade remote work environment–from the world's largest fully remote company.

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3. Recruiters Must Now Screen for Adaptability

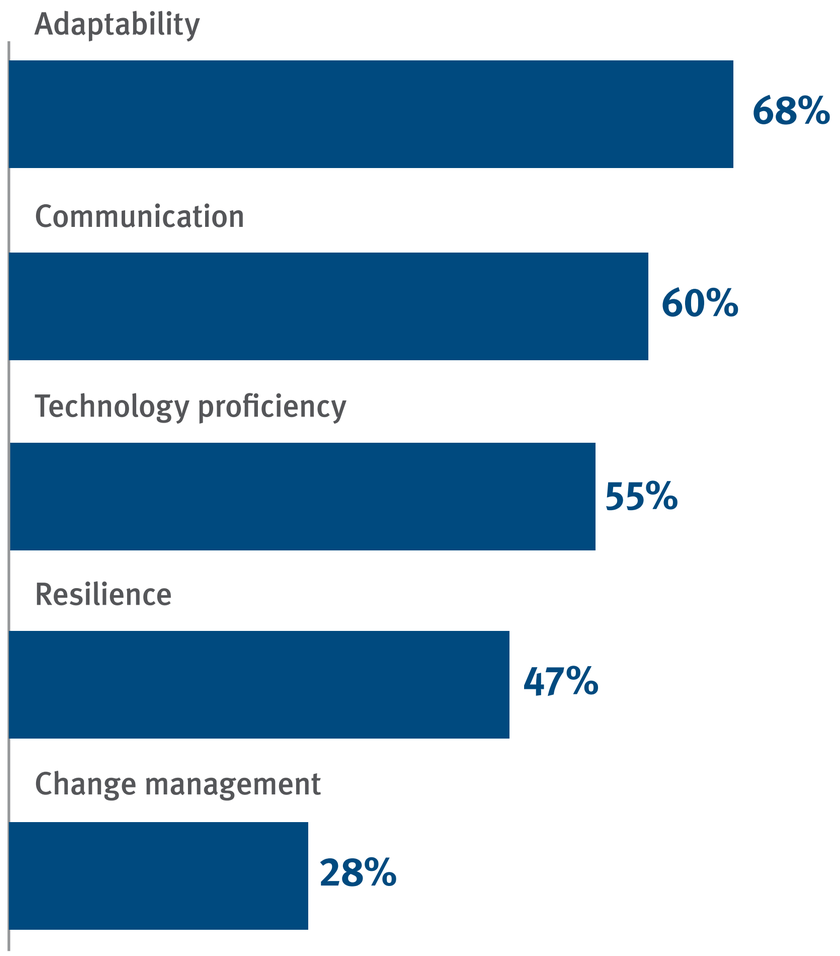
Not only will recruiters look to new sources and strategies to make more effective hires, but they'll also have to look for new skills that fit an unpredictable business environment.

Over

60%

agree they will need to hire workers with skills that weren't needed before

New key skills required as a result of COVID-19:



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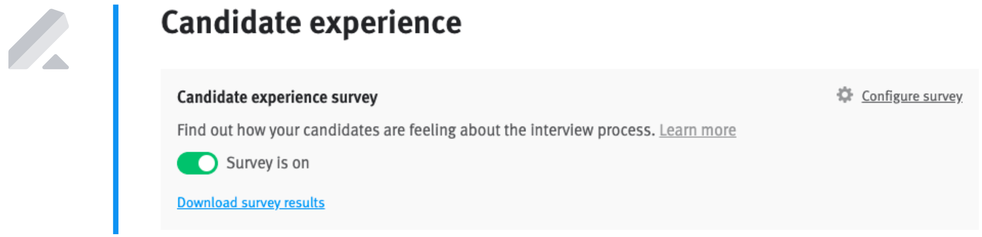
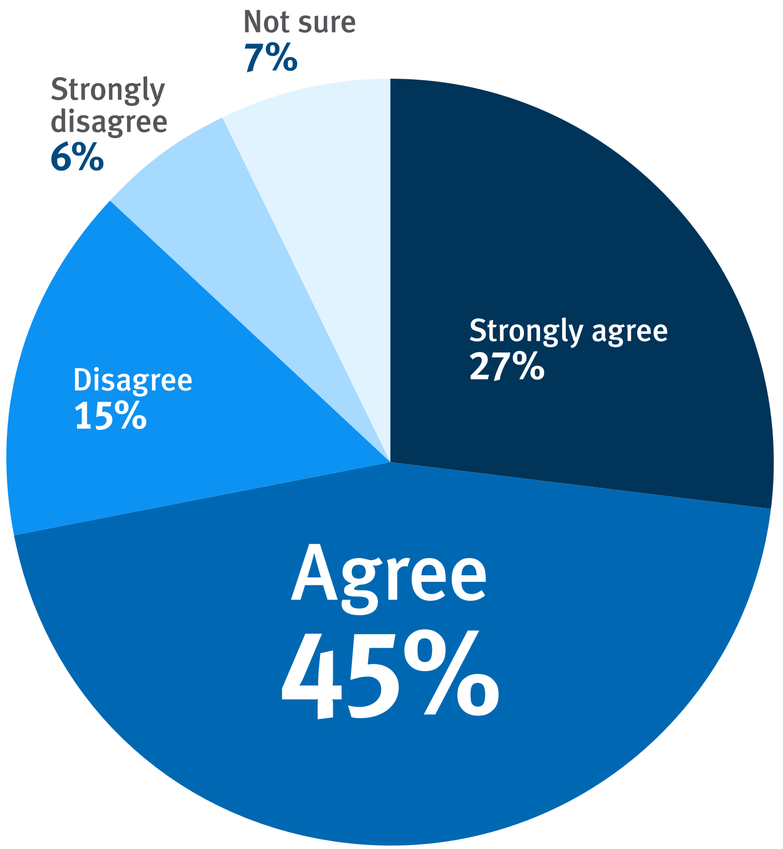
4. Standards for Vetting Will Increase in the Wake of COVID-19

Recruiting continues to change in light of COVID-19, and vetting is a two-way street. As employers adapt their approach to find and vet the right talent, Lever allows employers to gauge how candidates feel as well throughout the process through candidate experience surveys.

With candidate experience surveys from Lever, companies can gather valuable insight on how their processes are working for candidates so that they can strengthen their employer brand, boost their offer acceptance rate, and increase referrals.



We will introduce additional candidate criteria before conducting interviews as a result of COVID-19:



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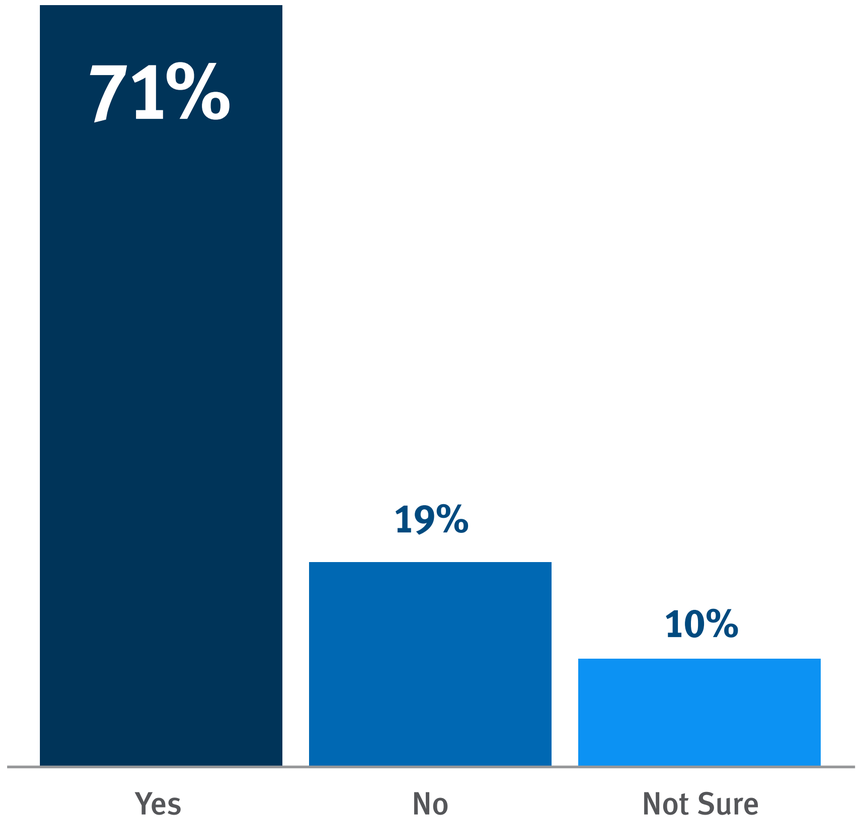
5. CRM Is Essential in Your ATS: Introducing TRM

Even before the pandemic, candidate experience was due for an upgrade. Now, with little to no in-person interactions to rely on for that personalized touch in the hiring process, candidate communication and updates have become more important.

Recruiters are ready for a new kind of candidate relationship tool—one that combines the functionality of a CRM system and an ATS. Enter Talent Relationship Management from Lever, a new breed of technology designed to meet the need for more personalized candidate relationships.

Is it now more important that candidate relationship management be built into your applicant tracking system?



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6. Rethink Existing Technology—What it Could and Should Be

Less than half of recruiters say they have the technology they need to build relationships with candidates. And, for many, their current tools leave much to be desired when it comes to relationship building.

53%

want talent management tools to better facilitate relationship building

Are you able to build relationships with candidates as effectively as you would like?

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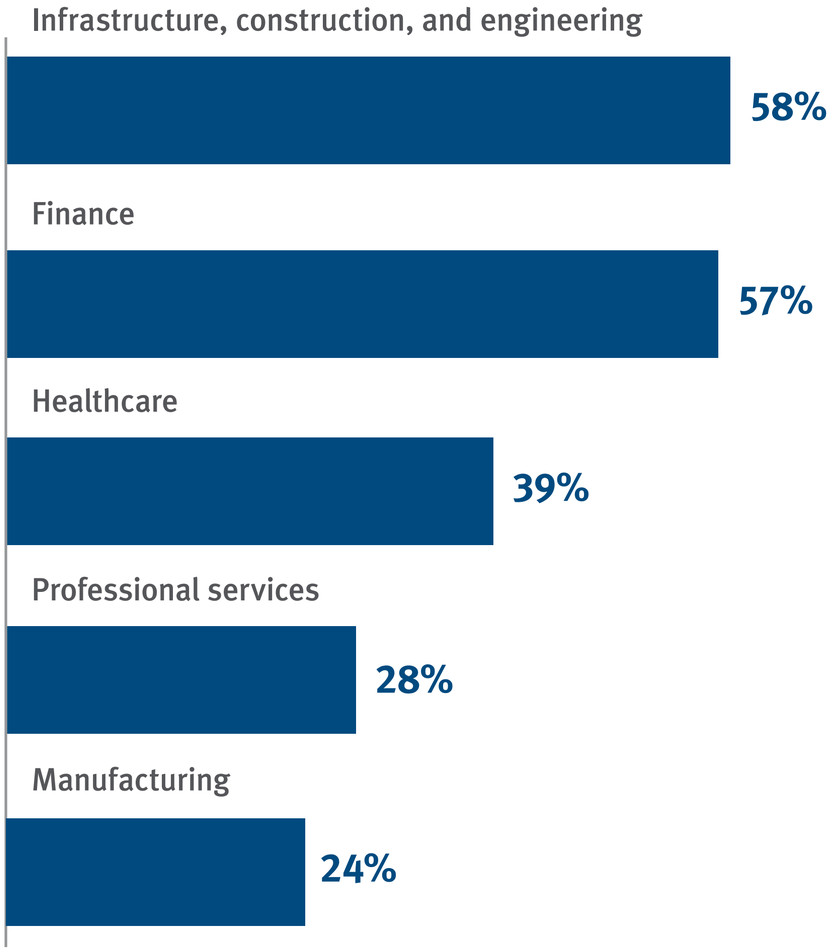
7. Prioritizing Personalization Varies by Industry

Not only can a candidate relationship management system eliminate data silos and provide a bird's eye view of interactions with candidates across channels and touchpoints, but it can also help personalize relationships with applicants—this capability is vital, as personalization has become more of a priority since the onset of COVID-19, especially in certain industries.

In the U.S., 57% of recruiters in finance and 58% in infrastructure, construction, and engineering report that interactions became more personalized and relationship-based as a result of COVID-19. This is compared to only 39% of HR managers in healthcare, 24% in manufacturing and 28% in professional services.

As a result of COVID-19, recruiting interactions became more personalized and relationship-based across industries:



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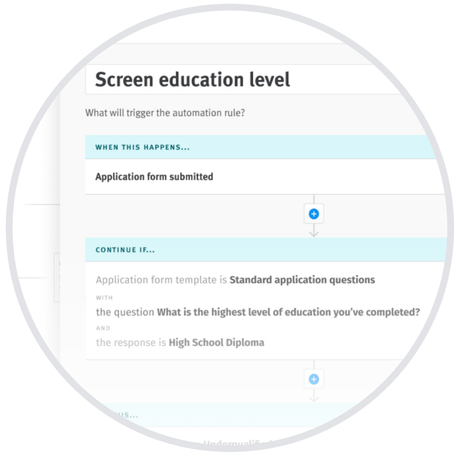
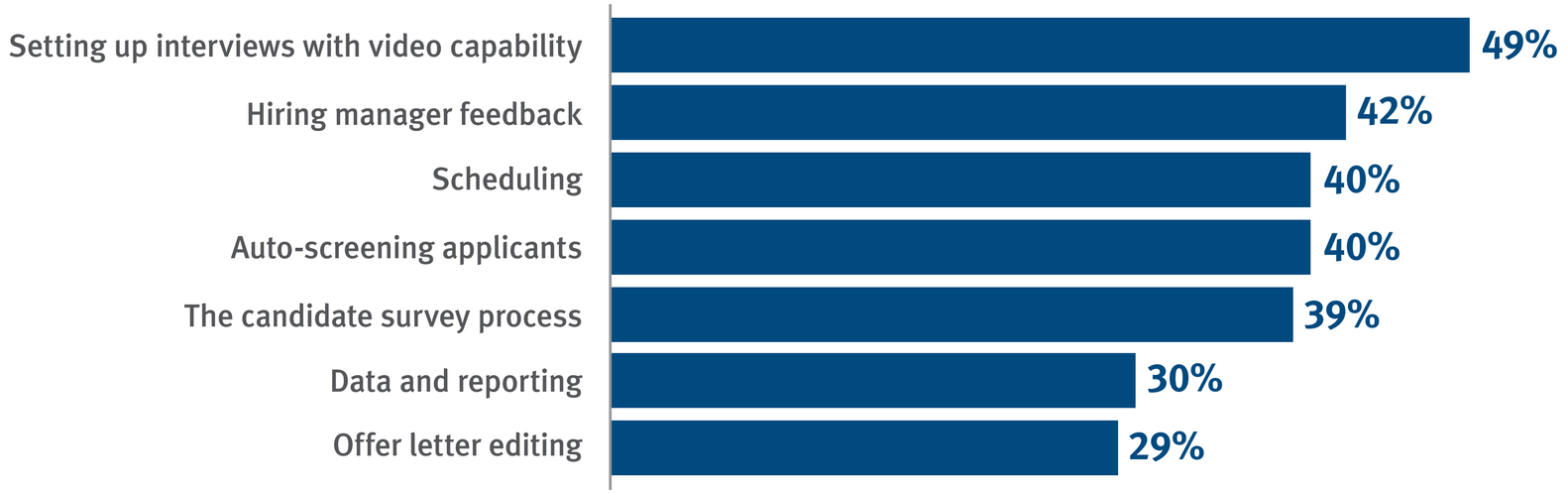
8. Added Automation Is Needed—and Customizable Tools Are Key

Added automation in recruiting is in high demand—from setting up interviews to data and reporting, there are many areas that recruiters wish were handled by technology.



Hiring workflows may be similar across companies, but they're never quite the same.This means that out of the box automation solutions just won't cut it. Lever's Automation Workflows, however, allow companies to automate the elements of the recruiting workflow that are unique to their business needs, providing them with configurable "building blocks" to build their own rules.
At a time when hiring needs can change quickly, Automation Workflows can execute key functions, from alerting applicants of a sudden hiring freeze to scheduling interviews. Learn more here.

Top 7 tasks recruiters wish were more automated:



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9. Recruiting Assets Must Be Updated—and Fast

What will recruiters do with their “spare time” if a CRM system and automation were to streamline their work? As remote work changes how workforces interact and perform their jobs, they will need to take time to redefine roles and pinpoint new hiring criteria.

81%

of recruiters said they’ll work more closely with hiring managers as a result of the pandemic

Assets recruiters will update as a result of COVID-19:

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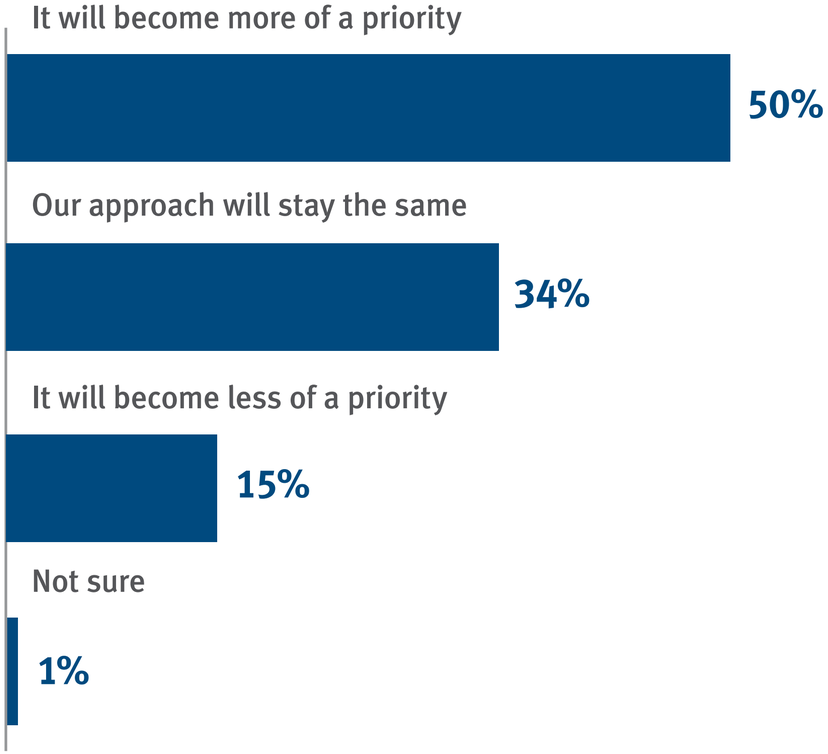
10. More Companies Actively Commit to D&I

Finally, recruiters will dedicate more time to diversity and inclusion efforts. Half said it will become more of a priority as a result of the pandemic and as companies are proactively combating racism in the workplace.

50%

of recruiters will make diversity and inclusion more of a priority

Changing emphasis on diversity and inclusion as a result of COVID-19:



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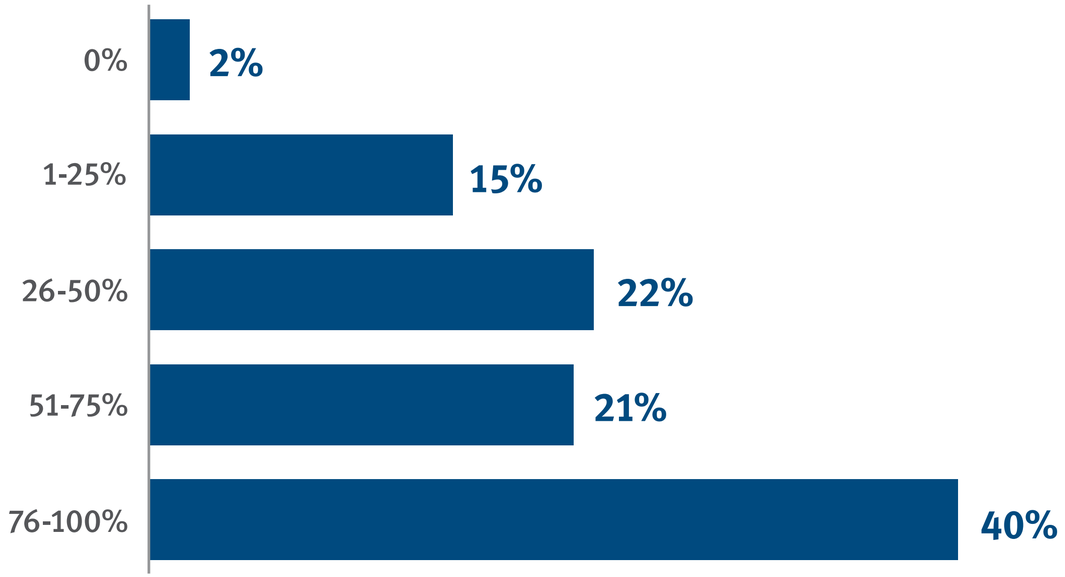
Remote Work Is Uncertain—But Normalcy Is Possible

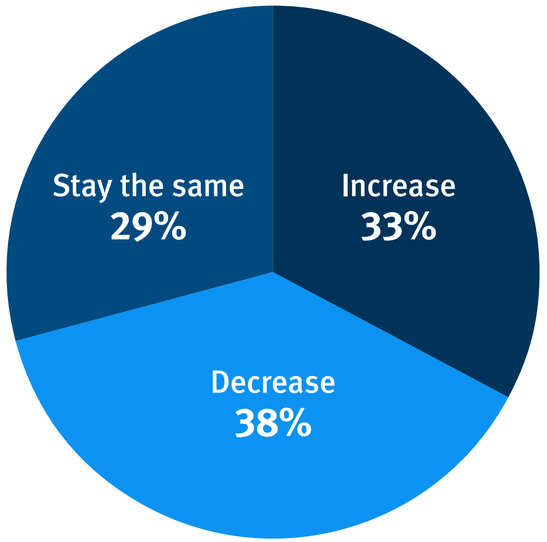
One of the biggest questions recruiters will have to consider as economies reopen and companies begin to let employees return to work is the role that remote work will continue to play. The consensus? It may be too early to talk about the "new normal," but being equipped for the "now normal" means taking advantage of what remote work has to offer.

61% reported that more than half of their employees worked in a physical office before the pandemic, and it's still too early to predict if and how that ratio will change. While only 33% said it will likely increase, 38% said it will decrease.

Percent of employees working in a physical office pre-COVID-19:



How that ratio will change post-COVID-19:



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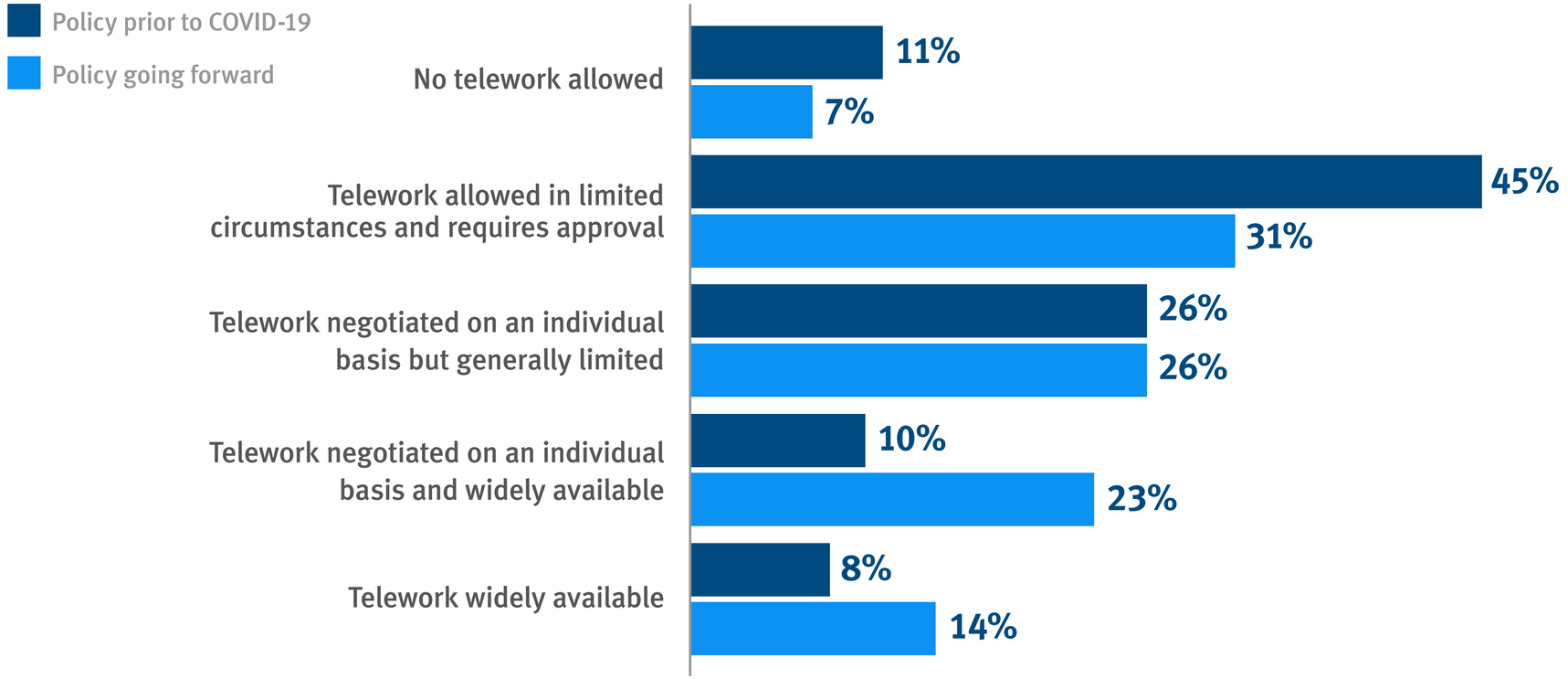
Remote Work Policies Will Vary—But Will Get More Flexible

While telework policies will continue to vary by company, they are becoming more lenient across the board with less approvals required and more flexibility. About a quarter of companies with 5,000+ employees will make telework widely available, a 12% increase from before COVID-19.

Telework policy changes as a result of COVID-19:



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For Many, Salaries Will Change Based on Geography

With remote work as an option, recruiters will be able to source candidates from around the country, and potentially the world. Plus, 39% say they'll be able to tailor their salaries to their geographies, which could be game changing if budgets decrease.

39%

of recruiters say they'll be able to tailor salaries to geographies

How a more flexible remote policy will affect recruiting:

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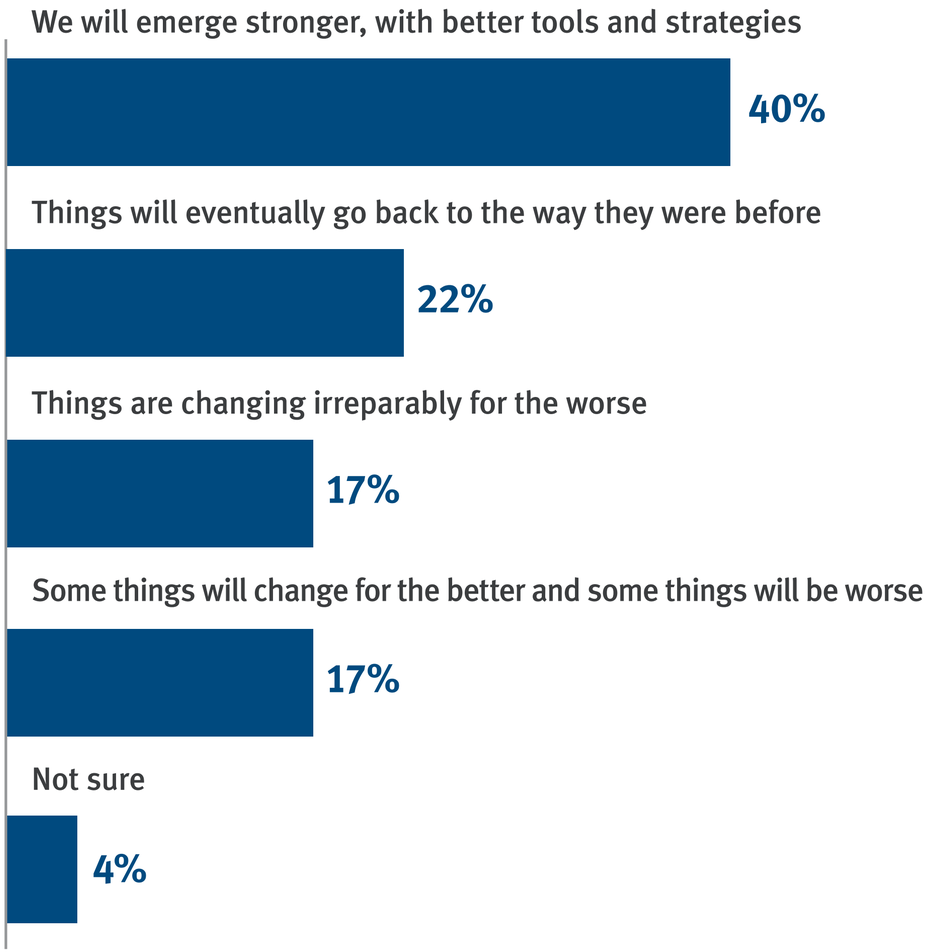
Better Days Are Ahead

It may be some time before recruiters can fully understand the impact of the pandemic on the future of work. And once they do, ironing out how to proceed in the most effective way will require strategic thinking and time. Yet despite the tall order, many recruiters are optimistic—40% say they'll emerge stronger, with better tools and strategies. Some industries are even more optimistic. 48% of respondents in the software industry believe they'll emerge stronger.

48%

of respondents in the software industry believe they'll emerge stronger

Recruiters' outlook on their work as a result of COVID-19:



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Talent Relationship Management (TRM) is the combination of ATS and Talent CRM in one unified platform.

Recruiting today is more about numbers than ever before. Having the right numbers at your fingertips can help you optimize sources of talent, create greater efficiency in your processes, and align everyone on your team to your hiring plan. Lever offers the ability to streamline your processes and gain clarity into your data, so that you can have greater success in hiring the right people.

As an all in one Talent Relationship Management (TRM) solution, Lever is transforming the way companies hire through an approach that allows talent leaders to attract candidates with personalized marketing techniques, the ability to forecast with strong data integrity, and includes must-have recruiting automation throughout the hiring process to further company growth.

About Lever
Lever was founded in 2012 and supports the hiring needs of over 3000 leading companies around the globe, including the teams at Netflix, Shopify, Atlassian, KPMG, and McGraw-Hill Education. Lever is also fiercely committed to building a team culture that celebrates diversity and inclusion.

For more information, visit lever.co LeverApp Lever @lever

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Zogby Analytics was commissioned by Lever to conduct an online survey of 553 talent and HR decision makers in the US and 156 talent and HR decision makers in Canada for a total of 709 completed surveys conducted June 11-15, 2020.

Using internal and trusted interactive partner resources, thousands of individuals were randomly invited to participate in this interactive survey. Each invitation was password coded and secure so that one respondent could only access the survey one time.

Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 709 is +/- 3.7 percentage points. This means that all other things being equal, if the identical survey were repeated, its confidence intervals would contain the true value of parameters 95 times out of 100.

Subsets of the data have a larger margin of error than the whole data set. As a rule we do not rely on the validity of very small subsets of the data especially sets smaller than 50-75 respondents. At that subset we can make estimations based on the data, but in these cases the data is more qualitative than quantitative.

Additional factors can create error, such as question wording and question order.

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