

TrueBlue's PeopleScout Research Finds AI Is Reshaping Hiring, but Communication Gaps Undermine the Candidate Experience

Global study reveals more than half of job seekers use AI, highlighting rising adoption alongside persistent gaps in transparency, feedback, and candidate communication

TACOMA, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- TrueBlue (NYSE: TBI), a leading provider of specialized workforce solutions, today announced new research from its PeopleScout brand revealing a growing disconnect between increased use of AI in hiring and the candidate experience employers are delivering, particularly in the areas candidates value most such as communication, transparency, and respect for time.

The report, *Inside the Candidate Experience: AI Is Reshaping Hiring. Communication Is Still the Missing Link.*, combines findings from a survey of more than 1,000 job seekers across 10 global markets with PeopleScout's proprietary Candidate Experience Index, which evaluates employer hiring processes. The research found that 52% of job seekers globally used AI during their job search in the last six months, yet the areas candidates value most – clear communication, transparency, and fair treatment throughout the hiring journey – remain the weakest-performing aspects of the hiring experience. While AI is helping employers streamline hiring, the findings suggest that efficiency gains alone are not improving how candidates experience the process, underscoring a clear opportunity for employers to differentiate by strengthening communication, setting expectations, and respecting candidates' time.

"Hiring is still a human relationship, and this research is a reminder that candidates remember how they were treated far more than how fast the process moved," said Taryn Owen, President and CEO of TrueBlue. "We're focused on pairing AI-enabled tools with clear communication at every step of the hiring journey, because that combination — not technology alone — is what advances our mission to connect people and work."

"We use AI-supported technology to help our clients hire with greater speed and consistency," said Rick Betori, President of PeopleScout. "But this research confirms what we tell every client: technology is necessary, but it isn't the only piece of the hiring strategy. Organizations that successfully pair these tools with transparency, communication, review and oversight, and human connection are the ones that build lasting candidate trust – and that combination is exactly what PeopleScout delivers."

Key Findings

- **AI Adoption Is Prevalent:** 52% of job seekers globally used AI during their job search

in the last six months and primarily used it to create résumés and cover letters (61%), research opportunities (56%), and prepare for interviews (46%).

- **Communication Gaps Persist:** 64% of candidates received no response from more than half of the employers to which they applied. Nine out of 10 candidates experienced ghosting during their job search.
- **Transparency Builds Trust:** 65% of candidates said employers never mentioned the use of AI during the hiring process, and only 25% were very confident that a human reviewed their application.
- **Transparency and Respect Drive Candidate Experience:** On a five-point importance scale, candidates identified respect for their time (4.36/5), a transparent process (4.28/5), and fair assessment (4.27/5) as their top priorities during the hiring journey.
- **Candidate Experience has Direct Brand Impact:** 37% of candidates who had a negative experience said they would tell others not to apply, 36% said they would stop purchasing from that company, and 34% said they would avoid the company as a consumer.

The Opportunity for Employers

The research highlights a clear opportunity: the areas where employers score lowest – communication, transparency, and candidate engagement – are the same areas candidates value most. For employers, this means the greatest opportunity may not be choosing between technology and human connection but bringing the two together more effectively. Organizations that use technology to improve speed and consistency while maintaining transparency, feedback, and meaningful engagement can build stronger candidate trust, improve employer brand perception, and maximize the return on their talent acquisition investments.

Access the full report [here](#).

About TrueBlue

TrueBlue (NYSE: TBI) is a leading provider of specialized workforce solutions. As The People Company®, we put people first—advancing our mission to connect people and work while delivering smart, scalable solutions that help businesses grow and communities thrive. Since our founding, TrueBlue has connected more than 10 million people with work and served over 3 million clients across a variety of industries. Powered by proprietary, digitally enabled platforms and decades of expertise, our brands—PeopleReady, PeopleScout, Staff Management | SMX, Centerline, SIMOS, and Healthcare Staffing Professionals—provide a full spectrum of flexible staffing, workforce management, and recruitment solutions that bring precision, speed, and scale to the changing world of work. Learn more at www.trueblue.com.

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