

## THE RECRUITER – HIS ROLE IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this article is to identify the expectations of IT employees towards the relationship with the recruiter in the selection process. We intended to establish their preferences in terms of selection methods and communication with the person leading the process.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research focused on external recruitment. A survey method was used, in which most questions were closed questions. A five-point Likert scale was used in the responses. The research group is extensive but does not meet the condition of representativeness. Therefore, the research can be described as pilot studies. They do, however, provide an interesting insight into the recruitment process in the IT industry from the point of view of contact with the recruiter.

**Findings:** Job candidates place a high value on the relationship with the recruiter. They indicate that the recruiter is exceptionally well prepared to conduct the interview. However, it seems that there are still reserves and opportunities to improve the recruiter's knowledge. At the same time, our research indicates that the most desirable form of recruitment is the video interview further tests and tasks verifying the candidate's competencies.

**Research limitations/implications:** Research indicates an increasing role for the recruiter in the hiring process. A significant proportion of candidates prefer contact via video interview with the recruiter, which implies that recruiters have 'soft' skills. The research was carried out among employees in the IT industry, which is characterised by a significant differentiation and dominance of the employee position.

**Practical implications:** The aim of the article, from the perspective of the practical application of the survey results, is to identify good practices from the responses obtained that can be applied by recruiters and Hiring Managers to guide candidates positively through the recruitment process.

**Originality/value:** Our article draws attention to the need to analyse the recruitment process from the perspective of the candidate and his/her relationship with the recruiter. We show that recruitment, as a communication process, can be a deterrent for candidates to decide to change jobs, despite the real (objective) attractiveness of employment and working conditions in a specific company. In this context, our findings may be useful for recruiters - those making the first contact with a potential candidate.

**Keywords:** job advertisement; employee recruitment; external recruitment; IT.

**Category of the paper:** research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Recruitment in companies is not only a way of hiring new employees but also influences the branding of an organization (Dolot, 2014; Ławicka, 2012; Sobocka-Szczapa, 2014; Wojtaszczyk, 2012). The recruitment process is not only used to find suitable candidates for a specific position and select the best among them. It is also a way of shaping opinions about the company, as all the experiences of those recruited influence what candidates think about a particular company or brand (Bieniak, 2015).

The importance of the role of the recruiter in the selection process is also pointed out by Marta Pawlak-Dobrzańska (2018) in her research on candidates' experience of recruitment. As many as 62% of the candidates surveyed by the author were dissatisfied with the recruitment process; they indicated that the recruiter did not want to create a relationship with the potential candidate.

These results clearly indicate that candidates, for a significant proportion, want to be convinced of some kind of positive relationship with the recruiter (Finn, 2017). In a negative sense, this may mean that a poorly managed relationship by the recruiter with the candidate may be associated with the failure of recruitment efforts (Kowalczyk, 2008).

The recruiter's work in staff selection can be considered from two perspectives. The first relates to his or her role in the recruitment process, i.e. reaching out to target groups of candidates and encouraging them to submit application documents (Mahjoub, Kruyen, 2021). The second relates to the ability to conduct at least preselection of candidates (Daniecki, 2015; Ingram, 2014; Wieczorek, 2012), which includes interviews, testing and/or presenting tasks to be solved. The ability, throughout the selection process, to maintain contact with the candidates and keep them informed of the progress of the recruitment process is important; and, in the case of a negative selection, inform what was the obstacle to obtaining the vacant position. Delays in communication are interpreted as negative signals regardless of the ultimate standing of the applicant; expecting the recruiter to be responsive is not dependent on whether the applicant is receiving positive or negative feedback from the organization regarding his/her status (Ryan et al., 2017). The importance of feedback for candidates is also the subject of ongoing research (Chawla et al., 2019). Recruitment competence models take into account technical competencies, behavioural competencies, soft competencies (traits and skills that have a particular relationship with personality, which are difficult to measure due to their subjective nature), knowledge, experience and performance. Selection and recruitment based on the above-mentioned competencies are extremely effective. The selection of the best candidate for a given position is based not only on his/her competencies but also on the competence and training needs of the company. Performed in this way (Ciećwierz, 2021), competency-based human resource management influences greater employee engagement and productivity.

IT recruiters are aware of what positions are most in demand at any given time and what qualities should define potential candidates. For the process to be successful, in addition to technical skills, IT recruiters should also examine soft traits, such as teamwork skills, efficient communication skills and, perhaps most important in the IT industry, the ability to solve problems and remove their causes and effects. However, for a job offer to be sufficiently interesting, companies need to meet the requirements of the candidates. For the effectiveness of recruitment processes, it is also important whether candidates accept the methods and tools used in recruitment (Woźniak, 2019; van Esch, Black, Ferolie, 2019; van Esch, Black, Arli, 2021). Amy Fin (2017, p. 239) argues that „a bad candidate experience will hinder talent attraction, especially in a tight market, when talent is at a premium. In addition to the work, salary and culture, candidates evaluate opportunities based on how they have been treated during the process”. Simply attracting attention is not enough; employers and recruiters should ensure that long-term contact is maintained.

The object of this study is to analyse the interviewees' recruitment processes in terms of the candidates' preferred selection methods and communication with the interviewer. The practical aim is to identify good practices from the responses that can be applied by recruiters and hiring managers in the business to guide candidates positively through the recruitment process. We have also attempted to identify possible directions for improving the work of recruiters in terms of the selection techniques used and the relationship with the candidate.

In this context, several research questions can be posed, with the content:

- Does IT staff place importance on the relationship with the person leading the selection process?
- Are recruiters properly prepared to conduct interviews?
- What are the preferred forms of selection of candidates for IT jobs?

## **2. Specifics of recruitment in the IT sector in Poland**

In the technological world, there is a shortage of specialists and a growing demand for them. Therefore, IT recruiters have higher expectations of job offers than candidates from other industries. This is related to the unusual methods that recruiters and employers have to take to convince such a candidate of their offer or organization.

An incredible competitiveness is emerging among recruiters and companies looking to hire technology professionals. Well, it is a battle in which the winner is the one who attracts and retains the specialist. One of the important qualities an IT recruiter should have is speed, deciding whether a candidate will accept an offer or take a competitor's job offer. Most IT professionals do not look for a new career path on their own. Therefore, it is important to take the initiative, use a variety of methods to reach out to candidates and be proactive.

It is a good idea to improve one's soft skills and personal skills, as well as to broaden one's knowledge of specialisations, the technologies used, the specifics of the positions in question, and the ever-changing needs of IT talent and employees. A straightforward and concrete conversation is, for professionals in the technology world, one of the best ways to present the terms of an offer.

The Polish IT market manifests itself in a constantly growing number of offers for programmers, IT architects, testers, software engineers, etc. Based on Pracuj.pl's report "Specialist job market", in the first half of 2022, 36% of the offers posted on the portal were for digital specialisations, 24% of the offers were for IT talents, which gave the first place in the list and means that it was every fourth offer on Pracuj.pl. It is also worth noting that the IT specialisation was in the TOP 5 of the most searched offers. For comparison, in Q3 2021, the number of offers for digital competencies was 25%, which is 11% less. The huge interest in technology specialists demonstrates the growing role in the labour market, as well as the wide range of offers for people wishing to develop in this direction (Raport Pracuj.pl).

**Table 1.**

*Percentage of job offers on the portal pracuj.pl in years 2018-2022*

Sector	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
IT	15%	15%	14%	22%	24%
sale	31%	30%	33%	27%	24%
customer service	22%	21%	18%	15%	13%
finance	14%	13%	13%	9%	12%
engineering	12%	11%	10%	10%	10%

Source: Raport Pracuj.pl, *Rynek Pracy Specjalistów H1 2022*, <https://media.pracuj.pl/presskits/rynek-pracy-specjalistow-h1-2022>, 14.07.2022.

### 3. Methods and results

Results of a survey conducted on a sample of IT professionals. The respondents belonged to an audience that was professionally active and had experience of the recruitment process. The survey used a quantitative method. The technique used is a questionnaire.

The number of respondents was 100, of which 25 were women and 75 were men. The respondents' place of residence (in terms of population), age range and education were also taken into account. The largest group of respondents were men aged 18-35, living in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants and with a university education.

An online survey (Andrałojć, 2006) is a form containing questions that are made available via the Internet and used to collect information and opinions from participants. Web surveys are often used for market research, social surveys and other research purposes. They can be created and made available using special web-based tools, such as online survey creation tools. Zdzisław Szyjewski and Grzegorz Szyjewski (2017) define an online survey as a social research

technique related to the questionnaire interview method; this technique is increasingly widely used due to its simplicity of execution (numerous publicly available tools to support the construction of the questionnaire and the process of collecting and counting responses), low cost, the possibility of easily reaching a large number of respondents and the speed of obtaining a result.

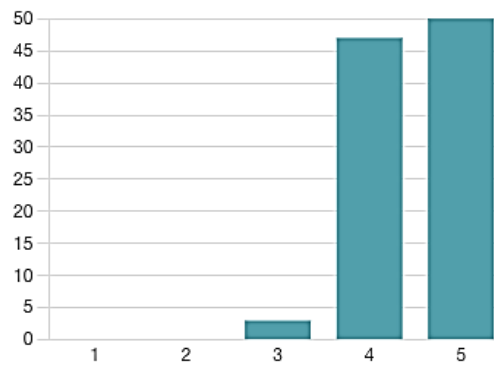
The choice of the research technique, in the form of an online survey, was primarily due to the easy access to the target research group and the very nature of the research problem posed. The online survey was distributed on social networks, including LinkedIn, as well as within the structure of the organisation where one of the authors works. To carry out the survey, questions were arranged to select the respondents to obtain the target research group. The rest of the questions were designed to assess the impact of the way the person in charge carried out the recruitment process in which the respondents took part. Mainly the evaluation of the relationship between the person in charge of the process and the potential candidate was taken into account, as well as the selection methods that the respondents think are effective and preferred by them.

Firstly, the method of reaching the candidates was examined, i.e. how the candidates found out about the new job opportunity. It can be seen that the vast majority of respondents (76) found out about the new job offer through social networks such as LinkedIn, GoldenLine et al.

In second place is the category "Other", which conceals in each case that the respondents obtained information about the offer from their friends. The items with the lowest number of responses are 'telephone contact' and 'via email'. The high positioning of social media among the methods of reaching candidates demonstrates the important role they play in the recruitment process. Listing and contacting candidates via social networks is extremely effective and therefore highly desirable for all technology recruiters. From their own experience, the authors can conclude that it is the activities on LinkedIn, conducting searches and contacting via a professional account, that yield the best results.

In addition to social media, a good way to reach a candidate is through a recruiter's network, building your brand as a recruiter and organization.

Next, the respondents' level of satisfaction with the last recruitment process they participated in was assessed. The survey was conducted using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means very bad and 5 means very good. Figure 1 shows the results of the survey. The majority of respondents (50) rated their most recent recruitment process as highly satisfactory. 47 rated it at level 4 and only three rated their most recent recruitment process at level 3. The average score was 4.47. The respondents' high satisfaction with their most recent recruitment process is mainly due to their good and very good relationship with the recruiter.



**Figure 1.** Respondents' satisfaction with the recruitment process – 4.47.

Source: own elaboration.

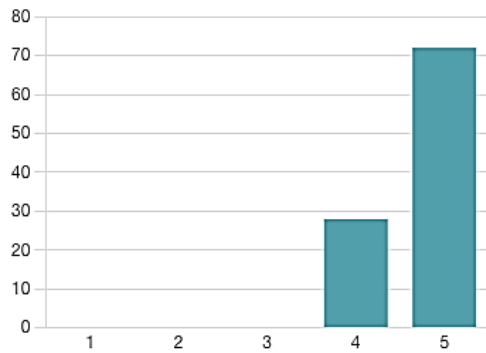
Another thing investigated was the receipt of feedback from the recruiter by the interviewees. 93 people confirmed receiving feedback after the recruitment process, while 7 people did not remember this information. This form of contact with the candidate allows information to be passed on after the process has been completed but also builds up opinions about the organisation's brand and the person themselves on the market and in the work environment. By informing the candidate during and after the recruitment process, the recruiter surrounds the candidate with care and professionalism.

Next, an assessment was made of how important it was for respondents to receive feedback, following the recruitment process, from the person leading the process. The survey was conducted using a numerical scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not very important and 5 means very important. Figure 2 shows the results obtained. The vast majority of the respondents (72) stated that receiving feedback was very important to them, and the remaining people (28) rated the importance of receiving information at 4. The average score obtained was 4.72.

Feedback is seen as important and highly relevant by candidates as it allows them to better understand their position in the labour market and enables them to identify and improve weaknesses. Feedback also helps candidates in future recruitment processes by enabling them to understand how they are perceived by employers.

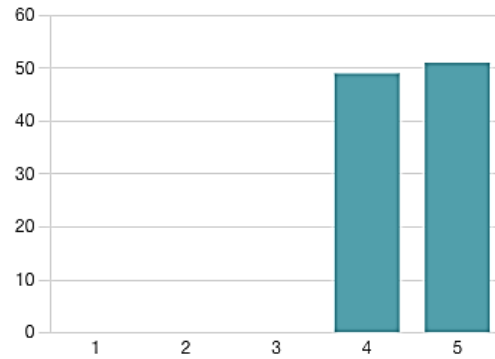
The next survey consisted of respondents' assessment of their contact with the recruiter. The survey was performed using a numerical scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means very bad and 5 means very good. Figure 3 shows the results obtained. All respondents rated the contact with the recruiter, to a similar degree, with a score of 5 (51) and 4 (49). The average score was 4.51.

The high ratings confirm the respondents' high satisfaction with their recent recruitment processes. Communication with the candidate plays a hugely important role here. The recruiter's openness allows the candidate to feel safe, and to know where they stand. All of this determines a positive recruitment outcome.



**Figure 2.** Degree of importance of receiving feedback from the recruiter – 4.72.

Source: own elaboration.

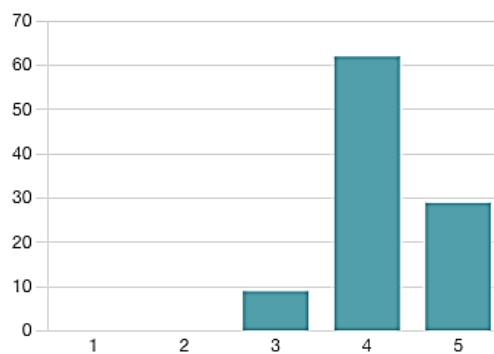


**Figure 3.** Evaluation of the contact with the recruiter – 4.51.

Source: own elaboration.

The importance of respondents maintaining contact with the recruiter was also assessed. A numerical scale from 1 to 5 was used for the survey, with 1 indicating low importance and 5 indicating high importance. The results are shown in Figure 4. The vast majority of respondents (62) rated the importance of maintaining contact with the recruiter at 4.29 said it was very important, with the remainder (9) rating it 3. The average score was 4.20.

Keeping in touch with the recruiter is important for candidates as it gives them a better understanding of the progression of the recruitment process and enables them to better prepare for the next stages. Keeping in touch with the recruiter also allows candidates to ask questions and find out more information about the company and the position, which can help them make better career decisions. It can also help candidates build a positive relationship with a prospective employer and strengthen their position in the recruitment process.



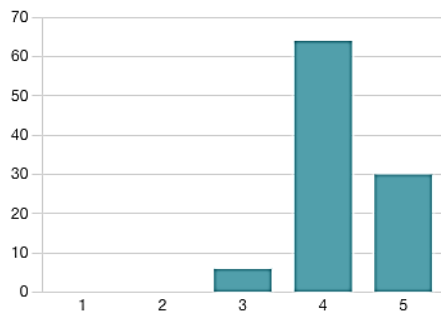
**Figure 4.** Degree of importance of maintaining contact with the recruiter – 4.2.

Source: own elaboration.

Subsequently, the questions asked by the recruiter towards the respondents were assessed in terms of correctness and relation to the required skills for the position offered. A numerical scale from 1 to 5 was used for the survey, where 1 means very bad and 5 means very good. The results obtained are shown in Figure 5. The vast majority of respondents (64), rated the

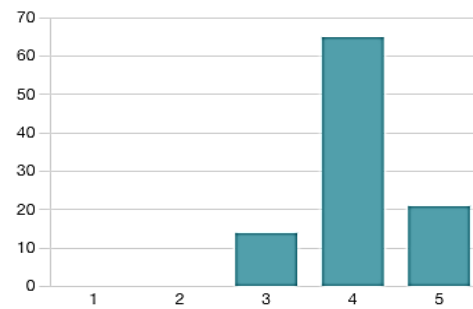
correctness of the questions asked at a level of 4. The highest rating was given by 30 respondents and the remainder (6) gave a rating of 3. The average score obtained was 4.24.

The results, which are presented in Figure 5 and Figure 6, show that almost all respondents felt that the questions asked by the recruiter were appropriate and, through them, the competencies and skills of the respondents were adequately explored.



**Figure 5.** Evaluation of the recruiter's questions relating to the required skills – 4.24.

Source: own elaboration.



**Figure 6.** Assessment of the correct examination of candidates' skills in the recruitment process – 4.07.

Source: own elaboration.

It was also assessed whether, according to the respondents, their skills were correctly tested, during the recruitment process in which they participated. A numerical scale from 1 to 5 was used for the survey, where 1 means very bad and 5 means very good. The results obtained are shown in Figure 6. The vast majority of respondents (65), rated at level 4 the correctness of the examination of their skills. The highest rating was given by 20 respondents and the remainder (14) gave a rating of 3. The average score obtained was 4.07.

One of the most important issues of the survey that was carried out was the selection by the respondents of the selection methods in which they participated, and in order, the selection methods that the respondents prefer. The results are shown in Table 2.

The most popular selection method proved to be a telephone interview and an interview, conducted via video conference. 90 people took part in both. Recruitment tests came second (73), followed by an interview conducted at the organisation's headquarters, then the Assessment Centre (40) and references (25).

The most preferred selection method by respondents turned out to be an interview conducted via video conference (73), followed by recruitment tasks (64), then recruitment tests (63), then an interview conducted at the organisation's premises (59), Assessment Centre (34), the least preferred being references, which were chosen by only 2 people.

Interviews allow candidates to showcase their skills and qualifications directly and explain their work experience. Recruitment tasks and tests allow candidates to demonstrate their specific skills and knowledge, which is important for many IT positions.



All of these methods give candidates the opportunity to present their qualifications and skills in the best light and prove their value to a potential employer, which is crucial for a positive recruitment outcome. At the same time, it is worth noting that through these recruitment methods candidates receive feedback on their career potential, which is important for their future development.

**Table 2.**

*Result of the selection survey of the selection methods in which the respondents participated and which are preferred by them*

Selection methods	Selection methods in which respondents participated (number of persons)	Selection methods preferred by respondents (number of persons)
Telephone interview	90	19
Interview via video conference	90	73
Interview conducted at the organisation's headquarters	63	59
Recruitment tests (linguistic, psychological, content-related, etc.)	82	63
Recruitment tasks	73	64
Assessment centre	40	34
References	25	2

Source: own elaboration.

## 4. Discussion

Based on the survey and analysis of the literature on recruitment in the IT industry, it can be concluded that this process is particularly important for the success and growth of companies operating in this industry. To ensure effective and efficient recruitment, companies need to use proven methods and tools, such as analysing candidates' qualifications, conducting interviews and tests, and providing feedback to candidates.

The recruitment process in the IT industry is crucial to the success of businesses and should be treated with care and attention. By using effective methods and tools, companies can find and hire the best talent (Walford-Wright, Scott-Jackson, 2018; Pillai, Sivathanu, 2020), which will translate into future success and growth.

The study showed how important it is for candidates to maintain contact with recruiters (Giannantonio et al., 2019) and to receive feedback from them. The results show that candidates expect constant contact with the company and that a lack of relationship may lead to a negative opinion from the candidate and a failed recruitment process. At this point, it is worth recalling Leigh Carpenter's (2013, pp. 203-204) statement that “candidates expect a return on investment, and time invested will become the currency that fuels their expectations. Their key expectation/requirement will be timely, accurate and transparent communication. Organizations which do not recognize the importance of providing good candidate experience practices will find it

increasingly difficult to source the right talent”. Equally important is the appropriate selection of recruitment and selection techniques, methods and testing of competencies and skills. Additionally, organisations wishing to recruit IT professionals should keep up with prevailing trends and be prepared for the ever-changing technology market by being flexible, and open to candidates' expectations. This will allow companies to remain competitive.

Nowadays, telephone interviewing and videoconferencing have become the most popular selection methods (Basch et al., 2020; Kim, Heo, 2022) for several reasons:

- Time-saving: Telephone interviewing and video conferencing make the selection process faster and more efficient than, for example, a traditional face-to-face meeting.
- Accessibility: thanks to widespread access to the internet and mobile devices, telephone interviewing and video interviewing are easily accessible to most candidates, allowing for more contacts in the selection process.
- Allowing you to see the candidate: A video conference interview allows recruiters to get to know the candidate, their behaviour and communication better than just a telephone interview.
- Cost reduction: Both of these selection methods reduce the costs associated with travelling to meet the recruiter.
- Support for remote working: In an era of pandemonium and the increasing trend of remote working, telephone interviewing and video conferencing have become even more popular as they allow recruitment processes to be carried out without the need to meet in person.

## 5. Summary

In conclusion, the IT industry is characterised by a high demand for technology workers, which results in a struggle between employers and recruiters to find an employee. Hence, there is the problem of building the recruitment process in such a way that it does not scare away potential candidates. The study concluded that it is necessary to build a relationship with the recruiter, which requires recruiters to have the right soft skills. The results also indicate that some reserves of process improvement lie in the substantive preparation of recruiters for the interview. In contrast, the most preferred form of recruitment is the video interview. In other words, candidates would like the selection process to use video interviewing possibly with tests and qualification tasks conducted by complete people with whom they can easily relate and who are friendly. It is also an interesting observation that recruiters have their databases of contacts (pools) that they use in the selection process. This indicates that employees are adopting a passive attitude in their job search, waiting for good offers to be made to them, preferably by a recruiter they know. This is somewhat reminiscent of the phenomenon

of athletes, musicians, and actors being guided by agents. The significant recruitment fees charged by recruitment companies also contribute to this phenomenon.

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