

APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM (ATS) A COMPONENT OF HRIS: BENEFITS AND ISSUES IN ITS USAGE

F. R. Alexander Pravin Durai¹, Finosh Keetticka²

¹ Former Dean & Associate Professor, Department of Commerce & Coordinator of MBA Twinning Programme, St. Joseph's College, Trichy

² Ph. D Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, St. Joseph's College, Trichy

Abstract: *The present era is marked with the great use of technology in all functions. HR department is also not an exception. Using technological advancement in HR functions makes HR department more efficient and thereby enables the HR department to become a strategic partner. Herein the Applicant Tracking System is software that is used to automate the recruitment function of HR. This article is an attempt to portrait the Applicant Tracking System, its benefits and issues.*

Key Words: *Applicant Tracking System, Talent management systems, Job applicant tracking systems*

Introduction

Human Resource (HR) management involves an important operative function namely recruitment. This recruitment function involves multiple but process based activities like gathering of applicants' information, scrutinizing the applications, separating the applications into qualified and unqualified for further processing depending on organization needs, scheduling the interviews and finally selecting the best applicants for the job besides preparatory works. This function not only requires manpower but also needs a lot of time and technology. To reduce the workload and to do the recruitment function very rapidly and smoothly, the HR departments of late employed Artificial Intelligence based tools like Applicant Tracking Systems. Applicant Tracking System is one of the modules of Human Resource Information System (HRIS). Using this tool, HR personnel can avoid spending countless hours during the entire cumbersome recruitment process. Rather they can optimize the recruitment process so that more efficient and qualified applicants can be selected with less human intervention.

Applicant Tracking System

Applicant Tracking System (ATS) which is also known as talent management systems or job applicant tracking systems is a software application which enables a company or selection agency to recruit employees more efficiently. It provides an automated way for companies or selection agency to manage the entire recruiting process, from receiving applications to hiring employees. It handles the recruitment needs electronically. Thus, it is useful to screen the candidates, to test the applicant, to schedule the interviews, to manage the hiring process, to check the references, and to complete the new-hire paperwork.

How does the ATS Work?

The Applicant Tracking System records the personal information, contact information, experience and educational background, resume and cover letter when an applicant applies for a job via online and will send the acknowledgement message of application to the applicant. The software itself will scrutinise the resumes and then these resumes if matched with the needs of the company or selection agency are then forwarded to the management. In contrast, those resumes that fail to meet the requirements of the company or the agency will get regret message sent by the software automatically. It will also help the management to schedule the interview time and send the message to the shortlisted applicants at prefixed time. Once the applicant is

selected for the job, the software will automatically transfer the data of the applicant to the employee file of the organization.

Benefits of ATS

HR personnel can enjoy many benefits when Applicant Tracking System is used in the recruitment process. The key benefits of using an ATS are discussed here.

a) Filtering Capabilities

It is one of the main benefits of ATS. When the applications and resumes have been submitted, the system will automatically sort out the qualified and non-qualified applications and the most qualified applications are taken to the management table. It does this based on certain keywords and specified criteria which are predefined in it. This feature can help the recruiters to contact the prime candidates and do the process in a faster way.

b) Reduce the Workload of Recruiters

When Applicant Tracking System is used the whole recruitment process can be automated. So that it will assist the recruiters to identify qualified applicants and to reduce the time-to-hire. Thus it reduces the workload of the recruiters and so that they can dedicate their valuable time for other duties.

c) Minimize the Costs

Since the process of recruitment process becomes automated with the help of ATS, the whole recruitment process and administrative duties such as communicating with candidates and entering data become cost effective. The reason is that it needs less manpower to administer these processes.

d) Enhance the Overall Quality of Hire

Standards and qualifications can be predefined in ATS. Hence ATS will find out the superior quality applicants and will reject the less qualified applicants automatically from the recruitment mix. This will help the recruiters to find and select the best qualified candidates according to the requirements of the organization.

e) Communication with Top Job Search Websites

Many applicant tracking systems make perfect arrangements to communicate with job sites. So that the communication of job needs and the job opening announcement through these specialized sites will help to reach out to a much wider audience and makes the application process simpler for the

candidates. When the candidates click on the information provided by these sites, they are directed to the applicant tracking system of the organization. Thus they enter their information directly into the system of the organization.

f) Compliance Assistance

Applicant tracking systems can help the recruiters to make sure the compliance with fair hiring laws. Systems will assist in providing the information about hiring laws to keep the recruiters and HR personnel about the up to date changes. These systems will also provide qualification reasons about the non-hired candidates and also will keep the important information to protect companies from lawsuits.

g) Onboarding Aid

When the candidate is selected for the job his/her whole details will be transferred to the employee file of the organization. Thus ATS helps to avoid the double entry of data of the employees. And also it will help to prevent errors and allow hiring managers to dedicate their valuable time on more meaningful tasks.

Issues affecting ATS

Even though there are many advantages of applicant tracking software, it contains many issues too. Here are some of them

- The important limitation of ATS is the Software and resume compatibility. Sometimes there may be errors of automatic elimination of resumes that an ATS cannot read and interpret. This may result in missed potentially great hires.

- Resumes in PDF format can be sometimes misread, which can also negatively affect the hiring process.
- Majority of ATS fails to read the graphic presentations of resumes created in different formats. This may also result in incorrect categorization of data.

Conclusion

Applicant Tracking System is the best HRIS module to help the HR personnel to have the best recruitment function. It automates the whole process of recruitment function of HR department which in turn provides the best experience to the recruitment team and the candidates. At the same time the issues in using ATS must be taken care off. Training HR personnel in technology will go a long way in automating the whole HR Process.

References:

- [1] <https://financesonline.com/applicant-tracking-software-analysis-features-types-benefits-pricing>
- [2] <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-purpose-primary-benefit-of-an-Applicant-Tracking-System-ATS>
- [3] <http://recruitingdaily.com/applicant-tracking-system-selection>
- [4] <https://www.applicanttrackingsystems.net/ats/features-and-benefits>
- [5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applicant_tracking_system
- [6] <http://insights.wired.com/profiles/blogs/applicant-tracking-system-flexible-features-broad-benefits#axzz4yflvgVWd>
- [7] <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-an-applicant-tracking-systems-ats-2061926>

