

# Choosing an ATS – The Right Features to Look For





Shopping for an ATS can be an overwhelming experience. There are numerous solutions available and each one comes with its own strengths and weaknesses.

The key is to find the ATS that best fits your company's needs and hiring process. When reviewing different providers, it's good practice to rate each one's features using the three criteria below:

- **Dealbreakers** – Absolute musts your solution needs to have because they're crucial to your hiring process.
- **Important** – Features that are necessary to your hiring process but can be accomplished through workarounds.
- **Nice-to-haves** – Features that aren't crucial to your hiring process but are still beneficial to have.

In this guide, we've outlined what an ATS should help you achieve and the specific features that do the heavy lifting for each one. You can use this information when evaluating each ATS provider you're reviewing and consider what features matter most to your company.

### Candidate Experience

An ATS should always provide the people who apply to your company with a favorable experience. The modern job seeker has certain expectations for the companies they interact with and your solution will help you meet them by providing the following features:

- **Careers website integration** – Job seekers visit the careers section on a company's website to learn what it's like to work there, view the open jobs and then apply to the role they are interested in. An ATS should integrate with your careers website so visitors can easily navigate from the information section to an online application.
- **User-friendly application** – The best candidates on the market won't waste time on a clunky online application. Seek an ATS with a modern, user-friendly application process that captures the information you need without frustrating the candidate.
- **Communications in one place** – Candidates hate waiting to hear back from the companies they've apply to. A solid ATS will store the conversations you've had with each candidate so you know when and how to respond next.
- **Templated messages for communications** – Candidates also hate receiving vague messages after being in touch with a hiring company. Look for an ATS that comes with templated messages for common communications that you can customize to fit your needs.
- **Integration with phone or video software** – Initial interviews are increasingly being done using phone or video chat software. A solution that integrates with the platform of your choice will make it easy to schedule screenings and keep a historical record.

### Interview and Candidate Evaluation



The interview phase of the hiring process can be the most challenging to manage. Recruiters need to accommodate the candidate's schedule and ensure hiring team members accomplish their responsibilities. The following features of ATS will help your company stay on track during the crucial interview and candidate evaluation stage:

- **Calendar integrations** – Whether your company uses Google Calendar, Outlook or another systems for scheduling meeting, look for an ATS that allows you to schedule interviews from the solution and your team members to accept/decline straight from their calendar.
- **Email notifications** – Members of the hiring team will rarely think to access the ATS. A solution that reminds them via email of a coming interview, the need to complete an evaluation and other responsibilities will keep everyone on track.
- **Replicate your hiring process in the ATS** – Your company likely has established stages in its hiring process. You should be able to set up the workflow in your ATS and assign an owner and participants for each one.
- **Structured candidate evaluations** – Getting solid feedback that goes beyond “I liked/didn't like the candidate” will help your company make successful hires. Search for a solution that allows interviewers to provide structured candidate evaluations based on the criteria important to the role.

### Jobs Marketing and Prospecting

There are numerous ways to promote job openings and prospect candidates but each one will come with varying results. The right ATS will help you easily market your roles and connect with candidates – and evaluate the success of each method – by providing the following features:

- **Automatically post openings to job boards** – Job boards will likely play a big part in the marketing of your openings. Seek a solution that has built-in integrations with your favorite job boards so you can post openings with a single click.
- **Purchase paid placements on job boards** – Paid ads on job boards can help your openings stand out. A beneficial ATS will allow you to purchase placements directly from the software.
- **Create custom email addresses** – If you have an employee referral program, work with external recruiting agencies or have anyone else promoting your jobs, custom email addresses will be a major help. You can use them to receive resumes and cover in your ATS and track the progress of each participant.
- **Generate custom links** – Similar to custom email addresses, generating custom links to your openings will help you easily track what sites refer the most and best applicants.
- **Push openings to social media** – Your company social media accounts are always a logical way to promote openings. Search for an ATS that integrates with your accounts so you don't have to manually share openings on each channel.
- **Prospect candidates on LinkedIn** – LinkedIn is naturally the best place to find candidates to engage. A favorable ATS will have features that streamline LinkedIn prospecting.



- **Candidate outreach templates** – Whether you find a great candidate on LinkedIn or another site, having templated messages available will be a major time saver.
- **Reports on the best hiring sources** – You'll need to understand what sources send you the highest quantity and quality of applicants. Look for an ATS will robust reporting features.

### Rollout and Scaling

The right ATS should be easy to setup and integrate with your company's website. It should also efficiently scale as your company grows. The features listed below will help you select a solution that is ready out of the box and scalable:

- **Simple setup** – Integrating an ATS with your website shouldn't require much web development work. It should be as simple as pasting a few lines of code onto the backend of your site
- **Documentation for customizations** – Development work can get more challenging if your company wants to build custom integrations with your new ATS. If that's part of your project plan, seek an ATS that provides detailed documentation for customization.
- **Great support** – As with any software, questions will likely arise as you use your new ATS. Try to find an ATS provider renowned for providing great support.
- **Training resources** – Most ATS solutions should be easy to use for anyone familiar with hiring procedures. However, it's still beneficial to find a provider that offers courses, webinars and other resources that can help your company improve its hiring efforts.

### Offer Management and Background Check

Extending an offer to an ideal candidate and checking their background and references is the final step in a standard hiring process. Seek out a solution that helps you manage your pending offers and ensures your soon-to-be hire has a clean background:

- **Built-in background checks or integration with your provider** – Look for an ATS that lets you perform background checks from the solution, or at least integrates with a third-party provider.
- **Offer letter and rejection templates** – Offer letters and rejection notifications should be sent right after your hiring team makes a decision on each candidate. A solution that comes with templates for these communications will make your job easier.
- **Offer management** – If your company hires for multiple roles at once, you'll want to know the status of the offers that have been extended. Try to find a solution that shows what offerings are pending and how long you've been awaiting a response.
- **Rejected/accepted offer reporting** – Knowing how many candidates accept or reject your offers will help you learn if your company offers favorable compensation. Seek a solution that has offer acceptance and rejection reporting.



- **HR software integration** – As your company makes hires, you'll need to set up each new employee in your HR software. Seek out an ATS that integrates with your internal employee management system.

### **Find the Right ATS For Your Company**

There are dozens of ATS providers on the market but each one differs from the next. Be sure to consider what features are crucial to your company's hiring process and carefully review each provider so you can make an informed hiring decisions.

### **Additional Resource**

Now that you know what's important in an ATS, [download our features scorecard and rate and compare multiple vendors.](#)



## Questions? Feedback?

Have questions or feedback for this resource? Email us at [marketing@recruiterbox.com](mailto:marketing@recruiterbox.com)

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