

starcircle

GUIDE TO SOURCING

Hidden Talent

Find out how ambitious talent acquisition teams can go beyond the obvious talent pool and tap into pipelines of undiscovered talent



starcircle

www.starcircle.com

Starcircle is a Talent Sourcing Engine that helps companies to scale their recruitment function and access pipelines of undiscovered talent.



@StarcircleHQ



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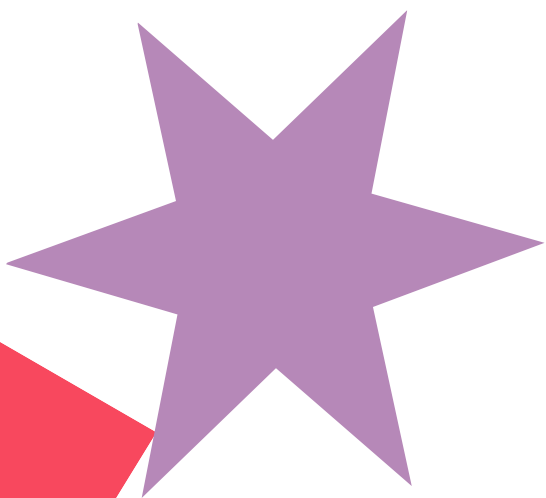
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Talent Sourcing

Sourcing has come a long way since its origin in the '90s. The old concept of a transactional function that exists solely to feed recruitment teams with candidate resumes can no longer meet the demands of modern recruitment. What, now, does sourcing actually mean?

Depending on who you ask, you can get a wide variety of different answers. The definition of a Sourcer has evolved in waves. The first wave accompanied the rise of job boards through the 90's and 00's. This role at this time required tech savvy searching skill, as Sourcers were required to get their head around the many different job boards, each with their own limitations and search engines, often requiring boolean search. The Sourcer was seen as an administrative function take the headache away from Recruiters. This changed with the rise of social media, especially LinkedIn. The technical complexity multiplied and the challenge became less about "finding" and more about "engaging".





RISE OF THE JOB BOARD

Getting Resumes

Sourcing was often seen as an administrative function for the sole purpose of getting resumes to the recruiter.

Tools

- Job boards
- Spreadsheet or ATS
- Resume parser

Competencies

- Boolean search
- Excel skills



RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Engaging Passive Talent

Recruitment began to learn from marketing: content and messaging became important, and the sourcer focused on the top of funnel.

Tools

- LinkedIn
- Email finding tools
- Talent CRM

Competencies

- Messaging content
- Targeted outreach
- Communication



THE AGE OF COMPLEXITY

Guiding the Business

In the era of information overload: the sourcer is at the coal face and in a position to reconcile the needs of the business with the reality of the talent pool.

Tools

- Tableau, PowerBi, etc.
- Integration tools
- Powerpoint

Competencies

- Data literacy
- Business analysis
- Presentation skills

In recent years, as the number of people on social media continued to grow rapidly, recruitment teams became overloaded with information. New tools flooded the market, many offering “silver bullet” solutions to sourcing talent. With the recruitment tech stack ever changing, and the realities of the talent marketplace continuously shifting, the Sourcer remained at the coalface: bridging the needs of the business with the realities of the talent pool.

This leads to the modern sourcing function: partnering with the business as a guide who can help to navigate the complexity of the talent market.

- **A Business Partner:** understanding the hiring context, both the business need and talent market. Working with recruiters and hiring managers to maximize success.
- **A Tech-savvy Operator:** able to work with the tools and technologies that are required to find potential candidates, including contact info, and work with multiple systems.
- **A Marketer:** crafting the right outreach and messaging to capture the interest of passive candidates, encourage them to engage in a discussion.

Hidden Talent

Before jumping to a solution on finding hidden talent, we must delve deeper to understand what we mean by the term. What determines whether talent is hidden or not, and what are the different ways in it can manifest itself?

The first thing to consider is the perspective. In this case, we are speaking from the perspective of the company that is hiring. Thus, “hidden” means hidden from the recruitment team.

This grid presents a categorization of passive candidates, based on how easy it is to find them (usually by performing an internet search) and how easy it is to engage with them (usually by phone or email).





WHY NOT JUST FOCUS ON THE EASY PART?

For most organizations, there is simply not enough talent available within the easy quadrant, and they may have already approached a point of diminishing returns in this talent pool. Furthermore, as the Pareto Principle or Long Tail philosophy suggests: there are far more candidates outside the bullseye than within.



WHY DO CANDIDATES FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS?

For most organizations, there is simply not enough talent available within the easy quadrant, and they may have already approached a point of diminishing returns in this talent pool. Furthermore, as the Pareto Principle or Long Tail philosophy suggests: there are far more candidates outside the bullseye than within.

- Don't ignore inbound.
- Review your candidate experience in the context of passive candidates.
- Start your search in your own ATS.
- Too-narrow focus is a barrier.



WHY ARE CANDIDATES HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT?

Why would a recruiter choose to skip over a potentially great candidate? Because they are busy and they don't have time to contact every one. Some candidates have the skills but it's not explicitly mentioned in their profile. Passive candidates often omit important detail because they're not looking for a job. Another reason why candidates are hidden in plain sight: the job description itself might be flawed or outdated, or the Recruiter may fall victim to unconscious bias.

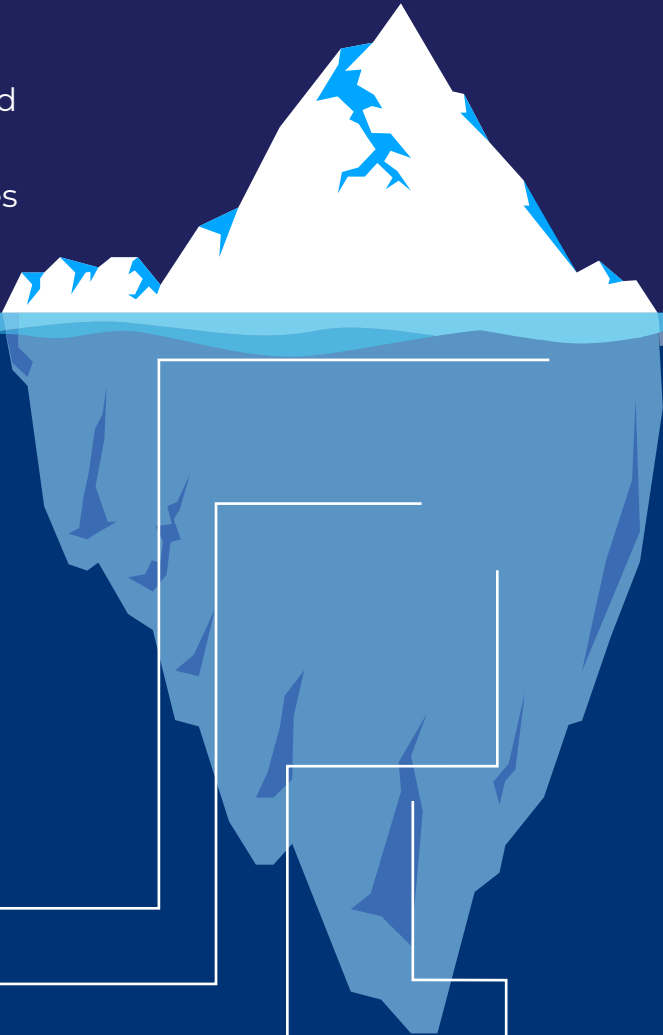
- Sourcers need bandwidth to explore and incentives should reflect that.
- Ramping the volume of pre-qual calls will uncover hidden gems.
- Consider the job descriptions also: can they be improved?
- Beware of unconscious bias.

EASY TO FIND & ENGAGE

The candidates that are easy to find and engage are just the tip of the iceberg, and the majority of potential candidates remain overlooked.

HIDDEN TALENT

Potential talent is hidden from your recruitment team for many reasons: this is the “long tail” of the talent pool that is greater in magnitude than the obvious part



Improvements to inbound talent attraction and resurfacing talent from ATS. Review of candidate experience to make it easier for passive candidates to engage.

Broader search to capture candidates a step further removed from the bullseye. Willingness to connect and pre-screen candidates that do not explicitly match all search criteria.

Pipelining & nurturing potential future talent who are currently not interested in engaging.

Using talent market data and HRIS data to validate and tweak assessment and search criteria, and to help influence and re-evaluate job descriptions and workforce planning activity.

The Sourcing Funnel

YOUR NETWORK

Rediscovery from your candidate systems, including Applicant Tracking System and CRM, referral from employees and contacts.

ACTIVE SOURCES

Direct applicants through your career site, advertising, and referrals. Searching job boards for active job seekers who did not apply.

PASSIVE SOURCES

Searching LinkedIn and other social networks for passive talent. Broader search using Google to identify blogs, directors, conferences, and other relevant sources.

SEARCH

PHONE ACTIVATION

Contacting passive candidates directly via phone is increasingly rare. Passive candidates are not actively searching for a job and do not generally put their phone number out there.

SOCIAL ACTIVATION

Activation within social networks, and community spaces including events. LinkedIn Inmails typically garner less than 15% response rate from passive candidates.

EMAIL ACTIVATION

Sourcers commonly send an email to connect with passive candidates. Finding and validating the email address is a valuable sourcing skill. Similarly, crafting the subject line and message is both an art and a science, with numerous tools to help.

ACTIVATION

BRAND EVANGELISM

A byproduct of the sourcing process: sourcers engage with a high volume of potential candidates and can help spread your positive message.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Another by product of sourcing: Sourcers can learn who is hiring/firing, when bonuses are paid, what skills are up and coming, what's changing.

SOURCER QUALIFICATION

This is not a technical interview. The sourcer is getting to know more about the potential candidate: their skills, preferences, level of interest in the company and availability, etc.. Even if they are not a fit for the currently open roles, they might be interested in staying in touch for future opportunities.

QUALIFICATION

REFRESH

People often get promoted or move jobs and information can get outdated very quickly. A sourcing function is continually refreshing and updating candidate information.

REDISCOVERY

Sourcers will revisit former candidates who may have been considered for previous jobs, at various stages of the pipeline, or who have not been contacted for a long period of time.

NURTURE

Any company that is serious about proactive and predictable long-term hiring must have a strategy for nurturing talent that may be interested and considered for future opportunities. This may be facilitated through Talent CRM software or Talent Community initiatives. A strong employer brand and regular, high quality content will help to maintain passive candidate relationships and will also result in valuable referrals.

NURTURE



SEARCH METRICS

Traditional search metrics included Volume and Quality, but these concepts are ambiguous in a modern, dynamic sourcing function. Companies must form a new definition of sourcing quality that takes into account business partnership, search evolution and the long term progress of candidates.

CAPTURING INTEREST

Many companies see significant drop-off at this stage in the funnel, because companies fail to contact or get a response from passive candidates. Companies must invest in employer branding and content, taking the time to craft a compelling message to potential candidates.

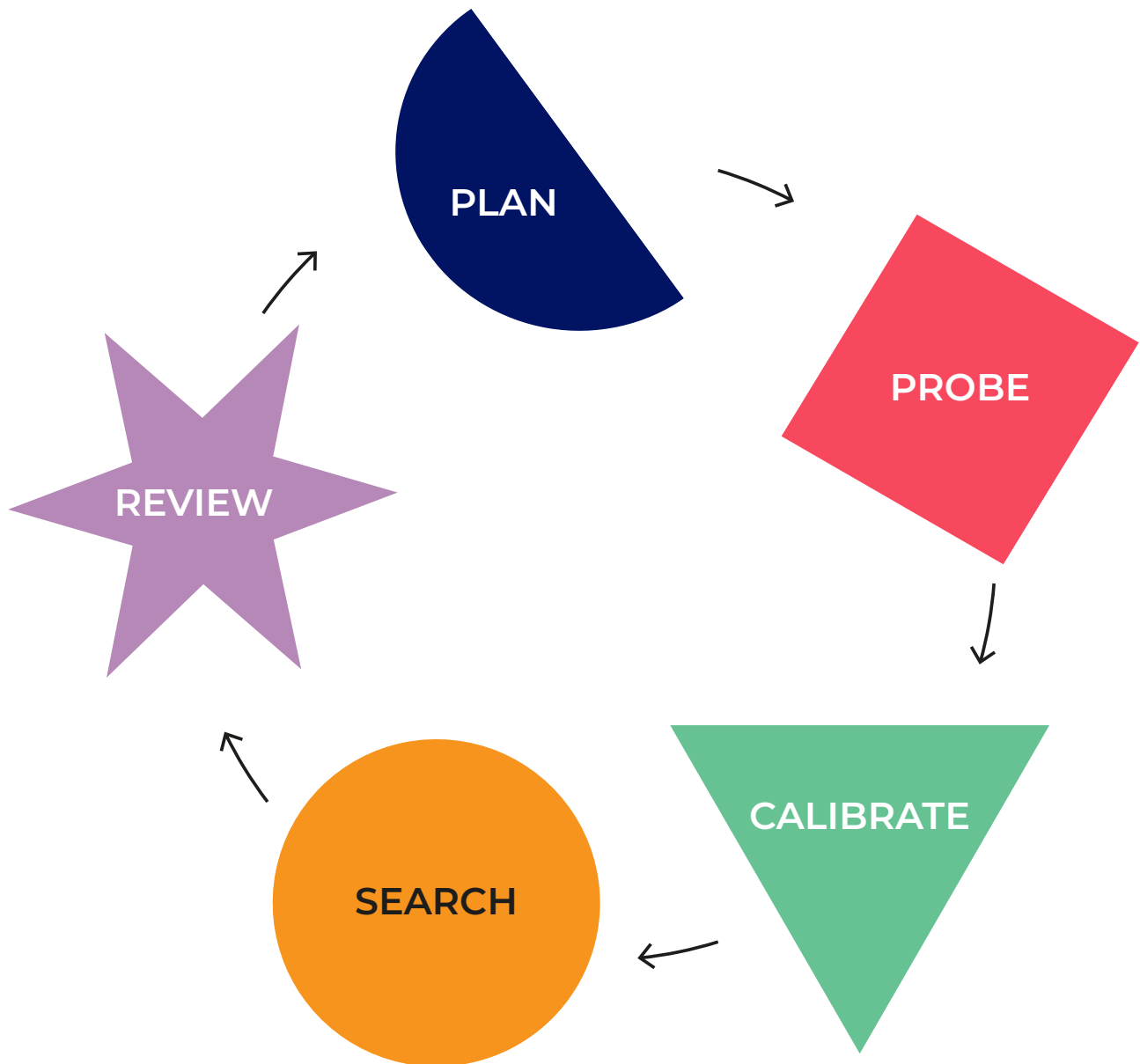
TALENT CRM SYSTEM

Interested candidates who have opted in can be sent to your Talent CRM, where they will remain in contact with your organization and may be considered for opportunities in the future.

APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM

This is the handover point to Recruiters: candidates that have been qualified and interested for an existing vacancy become Applicants and move to the ATS system.

Adaptive Sourcing



The days of rigid, transactional sourcing teams are over. In the era of complexity and information overload, the Sourcer is at the front line of a company's recruitment efforts, and a closed feedback loop is critical to success. An adaptive sourcing model is designed to allow a search to evolve, based on the reality of the market, and feed insights back into the company's HR efforts.



REVIEW

Companies must review previous searches and overall sourcing performance. Companies should validate assumptions that are made in the search and selection processes, looking for new insights that may require an update or tweaking to the approach. What did we do in the past? What went well? What could be improved? Any surprises? Anything learnings that we can apply?

PLAN

No longer an activity performed behind the scenes by HR or Hiring Managers, planning must be an iterative and dynamic process that involves the sourcing function to validate the existence and hireability of talent, and to know how to adapt. What was once a handover is now a collaboration.

PROBE

Sourcing team can perform a short burst of research that enables early calibration and adaptation before too much time has been invested. The probe should not just take into account the existence of talent that meet the search requirements, but also the response rates, and some qualitative data and insights, e.g., related the company's positioning

CALIBRATE

Based on the data from the "Probe" stage, the sourcers meet with relevant stakeholders to set clearer expectations and adapt if required. Adaptation typically involves looking at counter-examples of talent that is outside of the search, broadening search criteria or doubling down if there is available talent, and agreeing on a benchmark profile.

SEARCH

The search for potential candidates has always been at the core of the sourcing function, and it remains so. In a modern sourcing function, sourcers must go further than ever before to find and activate potential candidates, because of increasing variety of potential sources, and increased competition which mandates a higher level of throughput in the hiring funnel.



Hiring Friction

DEMAND ALIGNMENT



How well do we understand the hiring requirements of the business?

- Is the sourcing team aligned with the recruitment team?
- Is the recruitment team aligned with the hiring team?
- Has the long term planning of the organization been considered?
- Are there alternative paths to success?
- How might the requirements adapt as the search matures?

TALENT MARKET POSITIONING



How are we perceived by potential employees of the future?

- Do we have a good enough reputation or employer brand to engage passive talent?
- What has been posted on Glasdoor recently?
- Is our employer brand relevant to the type of roles in question?
- In the course of our sourcing activity, can we survey passive candidates to gain a better understanding of our positioning?

TALENT MARKET UNDERSTANDING



Do we understand where to find good candidates and the issues that may affect supply?

- Is there sufficient talent in the marketplace to meet the requirements?
- What skills or combinations of search parameters are likely to become the bottleneck as the search progresses?
- Are there other clusters or pools of talent that might become more relevant in future?

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE



What is the experience our candidates encounter during the hiring process?

- Are we measuring candidate experience?
- Are we losing candidates due to a cumbersome application process? How many clicks does it take for an applicant to apply to a job?
- How long is a candidate left waiting between rounds?
- Do we have different ways of communicating with passive vs active candidates?



PROCESS & TIMING



How efficient is our recruitment process at screening, assessment and selection?

- How long does it take for candidates to apply through the website?
- How many touchpoints does it take to gain interest from a passive candidate?
- When a new job goes live, how long does it take to get a first candidate in play?
- What is the average time spent at each stage in the hiring funnel?

SKILLS & ACCOUNTABILITY



Are roles in the hiring process clearly defined and allocated to individuals with the right expertise?

- Are all team members KPI'd based on placement? If so, then who is incentivized to uncover "candidates hidden in plain sight"?
- Does your team share responsibility for collaborating on complex searches, or is it siloed and transactional?
- Does your team have people dedicated to top of the funnel, or are they primarily focused at the bottom of the sourcing funnel?

TALENT SOURCING & ATTRACTION CAPABILITY



Do we have the right structure, skills and capacity to fill our talent pipeline?

- Based on your funnel metrics, calculate the numbers of candidates sourced and phone calls required: do you have the capacity?
- Does your team possess the technical skills required to source passive talent and use the many tools related to sourcing?
- Does your team possess the data literacy and presentation skills to draw insights and support the organization as a business partner?

ASSESSMENT & SELECTION



Are screening, assessment and selection practices aligned with hiring requirements?

- Have your screening, assessment, and selection practices been validated in the context of long term performance at your company?
- Is there potential for bias, especially confirmation bias, to influence the screening, assessment or selection processes?
- Are your processes repeatable and scalable, or are they cumbersome and time consuming?

TECHNOLOGY ENABLEMENT



Does our recruitment technology support our hiring process?

- Does your team have a Talent CRM or similar functionality for nurturing and pipelining passive talent?
- Does your company use automated email sequences, a/b testing, and similar techniques for improving outreach and response?
- Does your company use matching technology and contact information enrichment to accelerate the sourcing process?

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT & BENCHMARKING



Are we measuring and understanding our hiring performance?

- Do you have up-to-date metrics for every stage of the hiring funnel?
- Do you have diversity goals, and have you benchmarked these against similar companies in the market?
- Is sourcing performance based on short term placement metrics, or do you consider long term or downstream talent performance?
- Can you measure the value of the adaptive aspect of sourcing?

DATA INTEGRITY & AVAILABILITY



Is hiring data accessible when required and accurate?

- Do you have a defined data standard that is shared with your team and adhered to?
- Do team members manually input data into your systems, leading to a risk of human error?
- Are you able to accurately and easily search your own database based on key fields?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



Are we continuously implementing improvement initiatives?

- Does your team regularly review and inspect sourcing and recruiting performance?
- Do your teams collaborate on ideation around improvement initiatives, or are they siloed?
- Based on validated learning, is your sourcing team empowered to influence change in core HR and workforce planning?



Find out more about the Hiring Friction Maturity Model

Visit [Starcircle.com](https://starcircle.com)



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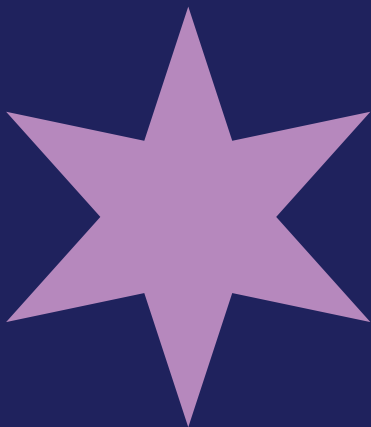
For over 15 years, James has helped build tech-powered sourcing functions for many of the world's most innovative multinational organizations.



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