

Four guidelines for using **AI** in recruitment

Artificial Intelligence can enhance different stages of the recruitment process but only if four key guidelines are followed, says Richard Justenhoven



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The goal of any recruitment process is to identify the right person for the job. The closer you match the individual to the requirements of the role, the more effective that person will be. You don't need Artificial Intelligence to achieve this. But AI will help you do it quicker and more efficiently.

Artificial Intelligence can empower you to improve your recruitment process but it won't do everything for you. Virtual assistants will not pop up and say "I've prepared a contract for a new candidate I've found." The reality is that AI excels at two things: analysing massive amounts of data and conducting 'narrow' tasks – the things you might outsource to a shared service centre. It can therefore make your life easier by providing useful information, at various stages, that will help you make a final decision.

AI's input in recruitment

Recruiters should always set the objectives when hiring. For example: "I want to recruit a new person for this team". AI can then support the desired goal at different stages. This could include:

- ➔ **Gathering information to create a role profile.** AI can help you to identify the characteristics of an ideal recruit, by cross-matching the personality profiles of high performers in your organisation. When you ask an AI system a very clear question, it will collect relevant data to help you answer that question. It can also help you to consider 'what if?' scenarios – such as what might happen if we hire someone with this or that profile? Which of them is likely to fit better into the team? In other words, AI can help you to weigh up the pros and cons of your options.
- ➔ **CV screening.** Many recruiters already use CV screening systems, to sift out unsuitable candidates. This is a form of AI and it's a good example of the efficiencies that AI can bring.
- ➔ **Assessment test analysis.** AI has been used to score assessments since the dawn of computer-based testing. It just hasn't been called AI. Currently, AI's most useful application is scoring video and creativity assessments. These involve vast amounts of 'unstructured data'. AI can help by analysing candidate responses quickly and objectively (without human bias). In the future, assessments themselves will evolve. For example, today's ability tests typically include yes/no or true/false statements, which are easily analysed. Future AI-powered ability tests could include open-ended questions, such as 'Tell me what you see when you look at this graphic'. Some AI-enabled situational judgement questionnaires are now beginning to incorporate open-ended questions.
- ➔ **Interview support.** AI can compile relevant details from a candidate's application and assessments for a hiring manager to review. During an interview, AI could prompt the interviewer with relevant questions and suggestions. It could check for discrepancies or inconsistencies in the candidate's answers.
- ➔ **Evaluate the hiring decision.** AI can help by collecting data that will enable recruiters and hiring managers to review whether their decision was ultimately a good or bad one. The results can be fed back into the process, so that even more effective hiring decisions are made going forward.

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Guidelines for using AI

Four key guidelines should be followed when using AI in recruitment. These are:

1

Recruiters (not AI systems) should set the initial goals and make the final selection decision



Importantly, your AI system shouldn't decide on the objective, nor make the final decision about which candidate is best for the job. These should always be human tasks. AI's role is simply to support and assist the decision process, by providing additional information and by enhancing efficiency.

2

Interviews should be a human activity



Recruitment is a two-way street: your candidates will be assessing your organisation as much as you're assessing them. If a job seeker is interviewed by an avatar, what impression does that create? It implies that the organisation thinks so little of them that they won't even spare the time of a real person. Is that somewhere you'd want to work?

3

Only custom AI systems will provide a competitive advantage



Standardised 'plug-and-play' AI systems are available today – but they won't differentiate your employer brand. If your competitors use the same systems, you'll all be chasing the same talent. Also these systems utilise 'deep learning networks' which learn as they go. This sounds promising but actually it makes it very difficult to explain exactly why candidates were accepted or rejected. These systems therefore lead you to make selection decisions that you can't defend, which leaves you vulnerable to litigation from disgruntled candidates. To gain a competitive advantage, you should use a custom AI system. These systems can be 'trained' to assess candidates in exactly the same way that your assessors and raters would judge them. In other words, custom AI systems mirror human behaviour and replicate the best practice of your assessors and raters. However, they take time to get up and running, as you have to pre-feed the system with relevant information. It can take up to six months before a custom AI system is ready to deliver real results. In 2019, those companies that have already invested in custom AI models for video interviewing and other recruitment processes will be reaping the benefits. CHROs should therefore be forming project teams now to look at AI, otherwise you'll be six months behind those pioneering firms next year.

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4

Ethical considerations are involved



There is an ethical question around how much support you take from an AI system. For example, are you happy for an AI system to reject your candidates? Or would you prefer it to 'flag up' unsuitable candidates so you can review and check their details? Also, when so much data is involved, the results can be misinterpreted or even deliberately abused. How you manage your data – not just in relation to GDPR* – will come under scrutiny. With AI, recruitment becomes more efficient but it also becomes more accountable. Good data handling practices will be essential not just for confidentiality but also for transparency and for maintaining your organisation's reputation.

By using Artificial Intelligence 'intelligently', you can closely predict which candidates will be most effective in the role – and most engaged by your organisation. The great benefit of recruiting 'perfect match' employees is that you'll see an upsurge in productivity, engagement and retention.



About the author & cut-e

Richard Justenhoven is a leading organisational psychologist and an acknowledged expert in the design, implementation and evaluation of online assessments. Richard is the Product Development Director at cut-e – the global talent management and assessment specialist which was acquired by Aon plc in 2017 and is now part of Aon's Assessment Solutions. cut-e and Aon undertake 30 million assessments each year in 90 countries and 40 languages.



Published by The Global Recruiter

This article was first published by The Global Recruiter on 22th October 2018, UK

More about that topic: AI in assessment

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* The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) impacts on how you collect, store, use and share the 'personal data' of your job candidates and employees.

About cut-e

Founded in 2002, cut-e (pronounced 'cute') provides online tests, questionnaires and gamified assessments for attraction, selection, talent management and development. The company's smart, valid and innovative psychometrics have made it the preferred partner of multinational organisations.

In May 2017, cut-e was acquired by Aon plc, a leading global professional services firm providing a broad range of risk, retirement and health solutions. cut-e now operates as part of Aon's global offering in talent solutions, helping clients achieve sustainable growth by driving business performance through people performance. cut-e and Aon, as Aon's Assessment Solutions, undertake 30 million assessments each year in 90 countries and 40 languages.