

10 things to consider when selecting your recruitment software



Recruitment: Market opportunity

According to Creditsafe, in 2015 there were 23,352 recruitment agencies in the UK.

In a buoyant but highly competitive market, what should you look for in your software and CRM systems to maximise placements, productivity and profits?

Technology: Your major advantage

The core capabilities of successful recruitment businesses don't change: effective search, efficient placements, productive consultants, sustained profit margins, together with managed compliance.

However, the technical environment in the recruitment sector changes radically and quickly.

- According to analysis from the Society of Human Resource, thanks to advances in recruitment technology, the average time to hire has dropped from 43 days using traditional staffing methods, to 25 days via an online marketplace.
- Tweets and LinkedIn posts have become some of the most popular methods for sharing opportunities with eager candidates.
- The recent past has seen the emergence of many excellent third party plug-ins that boost recruitment software performance.
- In the near future we will see the availability of fully integrated front-to-back-office recruitment systems that handle traditional sales and CRM functions, as well as business functions such as supplier management, HR and finance, with business intelligence built-in to provide line-of-sight across your operations.

Recruitment software - The basics

In an age of convergence that offers new levels of technology integration, you should consider your options to assess what will serve your operation today and meet your future objectives. Your choice could represent a short-term fix or an investment in productivity and the competitive future of the company.

A basic applicant tracking system will allow you to manage applicant workflow, candidate correspondence and the on-boarding process. However, a true CRM system will enable you to manage front of house sales all the way through to back office finance and HR functions. Today's advanced CRM systems provide business intelligence and a dashboard view of profit/cost centres with reports and advanced analytics.

The best recruitment software provides you with speed (rapid search, no data duplication, easy function navigation) and also control (planned workflow, assured communications, system and data security).

Ideally your recruitment software should:

- **Drive your profitability**
Without the right tools, recruiters waste 25% of their time searching for the right information to complete a task.
- **Ensure your compliance with legislation**
Including the Data Protection Act and Agency Worker Regulations.

So what's the right system?

The right CRM should be a customisable solution that integrates seamlessly with your other applications and speaks your language. This is easier if the software has been developed by recruiters, so it is good practice to look for a software provider with a recruitment background.

A flexible system will allow you to work the way you want, on-premise, in the cloud, using your preferred communications tools, with data fields and terms adaptable to your in-house conventions.

Also, think carefully about your situation today and plans for the future. Will you outgrow a system or does it scale?

The following sections cover 10 topics to consider when selecting the best recruitment platform for your business:

- User friendly
- Depth of functionality
- Flexibility
- Compliance
- Mobile
- Business Continuity
- Deployment method
- Switchover Programme
- Reporting
- Integration

Are consultants going to use the system?



What is the point of acquiring recruitment software if consultants don't use it? It is key that the user finds the interface familiar and easy to navigate otherwise, chances are that they will either invent their own workarounds or even worse, go back to using spreadsheets.

Your CRM interface should be designed so that 'It doesn't make you think too much' to find what you need.

Here are some questions that you should ask a recruitment CRM supplier:

1. Will it be simple to install and will the vendor manage the process?

Installation is the first point of contact for users, so it had better be a friendly process.

2. Is the system easy to update?

If updates are complex, users will skip them. Are updates automated?

3. Intuitive, efficient and navigable?

Does the software provide an efficient means to completing jobs?

4. Easy to troubleshoot

If there is a knowledge gap or snag, is support on hand to resolve issues quickly?

5. Legacy friendly

Will the new system work with your current admin software and preferred third-party systems?

1. User friendly

RDB ProNet provides simple ongoing development and expansion.

From the most basic user to the most technical IT manager, RDB ProNet offers unrivalled ease of use, scalability, data management and business process management.

// First Choice Software has developed a product in RDB ProNet that has everything a business needs to deliver effective recruitment solutions. From its easy to use interface and advanced searching functions to its ability to customize to fit the exact needs of our business. //

Patrick Bell, Director,
Genesis Associates

Do your consultants have all the functions available to do their jobs?



Today you have many functionality options. The market offers a wide range, from browser-based services that provide specialists, but sometimes limited functionality, for example simple applicant tracking, to feature-rich options that incorporate not only recruitment functions but also business management, reporting and analytics tools.

Among the functions and features required for recruiter success are rapid search capability, de-duplicated data, calendar integration, built-in client communication, automated CRM functions and assured compliance.

Explore what your team really needs to do its job and make a list of 'Required' and 'Desired' functionality.

A good tip is to select a solution that has all of them, both the required and nice-to-haves, but is flexible enough to remove/hide some of them in case you want to make your interface look less cluttered.

Explore what your team really needs to do its job.

2. Depth of functionality

From emailing clients, candidates and contacts, to managing interviews and calendars,

from running Boolean search or text searches to using multi-posters.

Are these functions available in one place so recruiters don't waste time clicking from screen to screen, from system to system or from desktop to browser?

// The database has a fantastic diary, client canvassing and applicant contact management functions. A real understanding of exactly what our business needs. //

Stephen Bowler, Director
Puro Search

How easy is it to make changes in the system so that it adapts to my needs?



Custom software accounts for 25.6% of all software spending.

(Forrester)

A great recruitment software platform functions as a flexible application that can accommodate changes as your business needs grow.

Simplicity is key to ensuring widespread adoption of the software and allowing you to create your own custom categories to enhance search functionality and improve productivity.

As your company grows, the ability to customise your platform becomes a greater requirement. Open-source technologies, such as .Net and Microsoft SQL, make this possible since your administrators will have the ability to edit the stored procedures in the rules layer.

The best option is to choose a system that is flexible enough that it allows you to discover new creative ways to enhance your system through work-flows, a tailored look-and-feel, labelling, layout and plug-ins.

3. Flexibility

RDB ProNet's flexible features can be customised to suit your organisation's changing needs.

Incurring no downtime, the system will increase productivity and place more candidates with software that's always up, keeping your consultants earning and delivering better candidate experiences.

// We are in a really good place. I am loving the application and the flexibility it gives us. It has been very well received by all the offices and the mood in the business is very positive about it. //

Lee Smith, CIO
Randstad

Am I complying with the law?



Four out of five internal IT security incidents are due to erroneous employee actions.

(Kaspersky Lab)

The major contributor to data theft in the recruitment industry is stolen applicant profiles and CVs by rogue consultants leaving to set up on their own or join a competitor. While many are caught and prosecuted, prevention is better than cure.

Your recruitment software should ensure that information is locked down to secure your business and demonstrate compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Agencies must demonstrate compliance with the Agency Worker Regulations and Working Time Directive. From the day they start, temporary workers now have the same employment rights as their permanent colleagues, then after 12 weeks, a temporary worker qualifies for the same rights as a direct employee.

Compliance here requires 'clock watching' to ensure that the relevant entitlements kick in at the correct time, which can be a resource-intensive task if your recruitment software isn't automating the process for you.

4. Compliance

Avoid non-compliance with legislation by minimising the risk of internal database breaches with full audit and reporting capability.

In RDB ProNet, data is only stored within the database, so it cannot be copied or downloaded onto portable storage devices.

Furthermore, every action is traceable, which makes accurate event audits possible and adds another layer of security to your operations.

// We've been using RDB ProNet for more than ten years. First Choice has become our most trusted and valued business partner and we can always rely on them. //
Ed Simpson, Owner
The Placement Group

From which devices can I access this system?



74% of organisations have embraced bring-your-own-device (BYOD)?

(Tech Pro)

It is essential that your CRM is accessible from different devices.

In recruitment, more and more professionals are spending time away from the office or even working from home. This modality allows agencies to have highly experienced recruiters back into the industry that can't do the normal hours demanded by traditional set ups and long commuting hours.

It's essential that you provide consultants with the right tools to enable them to be as productive on the move/at home, as they would be sat at their desk.

Off-site productivity requires speedy systems, simple functionality and ready access to clearly-presented key information via laptop, tablet or phone.

A remote office system will allow your home-based employee to work with the platform in the same way as the office-based ones, and at the same time will allow you to monitor their activity.

5. Mobile

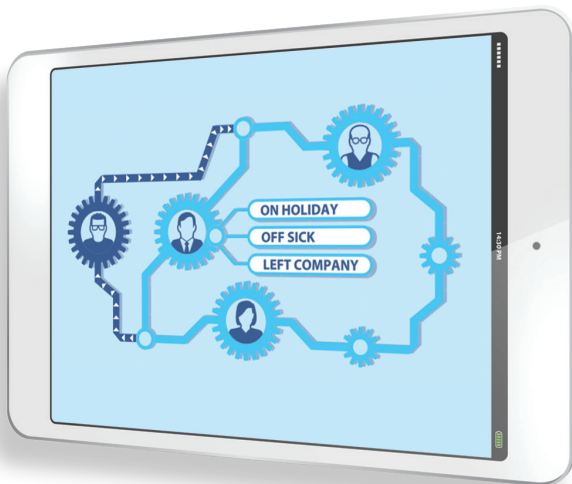
RDB ProNet is the only provider with an approved Apple app.

Providing remote access to all your clients, contacts and applicants, as well as up-to-the-minute dashboard information on KPIs and sales reports, you can remain productive on the move, and demonstrate real-time progress when visiting clients.

// The best recruitment platform for ease of use, productivity and flexibility. //

Dominic Wade,
Managing Director
Wade Macdonald

What happens if my consultants leave?



The average Brit spends almost a year (360 days) off sick throughout their working life.

(Well Working Matters)

Disaster is not the only force that can disrupt your ability to do business. What happens when consultants leave, go on holiday or fall ill?

Your recruitment platform must ensure that your business runs smoothly even when people are away from their desks or cannot be reached by phone.

A true CRM recruitment system means that your business is customer-centric and protected against the risks of absent or departed consultants.

You need to be able to track the calls that have been made, emails and SMSs sent, interviews scheduled and virtually every action performed by each of your recruiters so, in case one of them is not around, anyone can easily catch up on the work.

6. Business continuity

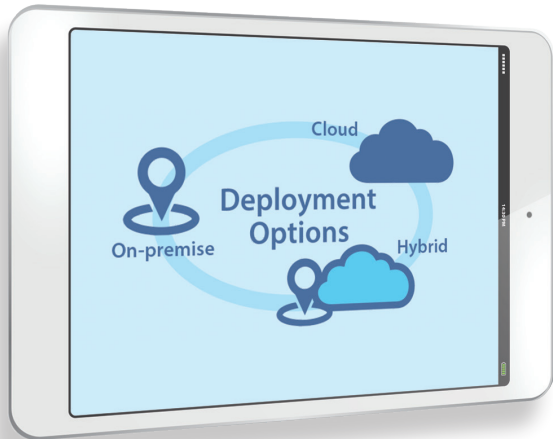
RDB ProNet selectively synchronises email from candidates and clients with their database records,

so if your consultants leave, go on holiday or fall ill you can still access these crucial communications.

// We have been using RDB ProNet for the past 10 years...The continuing development ensures that we stay future-proof, which is essential given the fast pace of the recruitment market. //

Antony Meek, Senior Recruitment Consultant,
Robertson Sumner

Cloud or on-premise: what works best for recruiters?



To cloud or not to cloud, that is the question. You have to be particularly smart here as vendors that do not offer a particular hosting solution, will try to convince you that the one they offer is the right one.

Cloud software vendors will explain the benefits in terms of the electricity costs savings due to not having your own servers on-premise and the marvels of very few downtimes. On the other hand, on-premise software providers will make you hesitate about whether your internet bandwidth is enough to run your business in the cloud.

The truth is that although much has been discussed about which option is better, this depends on your specific company resources and needs.

The ideal in this sense is to choose a vendor that is able to deploy their platform in the cloud, on-premise or as a blended service, on a SaaS, rental or purchase basis, so you can choose.

Most recruiters see Outlook as a tool of the trade so they use the local Outlook desktop application as they get a fast and rich desktop experience. Few would trade for a web-based version of Outlook, despite perceived low cost. Similarly, iPhones and iPads are the mobile tool of choice, often used in front of clients and candidates. Users generally elect to install a local application on their device for speed and a richer user experience.

Cloud is relevant for recruiters, but pragmatism, reality, and an anchor in the analysis of your real business needs may lead you to a blend of client and cloud capabilities that can give you the best of both worlds.

7. Deployment method

Suitable for any
IT environment,
RDB ProNet offers
the widest range of
deployment options

from on-premise to cloud or hybrid solutions. It enables mobility to keep your consultants productive while on the move.

And RDB ProNet integrates with leading recruitment support services.

“ We have looked at a number of alternative systems and not found anything that provides the functionality of RDB ProNet and such good value. ”

Mark Dainty
HFG

Is the change process going to be more painful than staying in my old system?



You should look for references of supplier clients who have already been through that process and make sure the supplier has a proven Switchover Programme.

Change is one of the biggest fears that organisations face. Many companies tolerate inefficiencies because of the perceived risk associated with adopting a new system - the risk of downtime being a primary concern.

Like any IT project, smooth implementation of a new recruitment platform requires planning, project management and processes, and your provider should be there to hold your hand on some steps along the way:

- Project definition
- Data optimisation
- Migration
- User adoption
- Training

8. Switchover programme

Our Switchover programme makes the change to RDB ProNet as smooth as possible.

First Choice Software have managed to install 500 seats across 7 divisions of a major enterprise in 3 months with minimum disruption. The company now enjoys significantly higher levels of customer and staff satisfaction, improved productivity and profits, as well as a vastly streamlined IT infrastructure that requires less maintenance and allows customer-facing staff to focus on winning more business.

// We started using RDB ProNet as a 5 person company. We now stand as a 120 person Global Recruitment Intermediary... This goes to show how flexible and reliable RDB ProNet is. //

Simon Parsons, IT Director
Leap 29

How can the system help me make better informed decisions?



34% of users demand customisable dashboards and reporting to aid with BI (Business intelligence).
(Software Advice)

The ideal recruitment software platform will support recruitment consultants in their day-to-day roles, as well as support management by providing reports and generating line-of-sight across the business.

Recruitment software should give you information about things like:

Market Trends:

From which geographic areas do most of my placement fees come?

Employee performance:

How are my consultants performing against their targets?

Advertising spend:

What are the main sources of new applicants?

Resource planning:

Which months do I usually place more contracts as opposed to months that I place more perms. How can I can plan resources accordingly?

Reporting and BI turns data into actionable information that helps you identify connections between different areas of your business that otherwise may not seem related. To make the most of this data your reporting should be: real-time, shareable, customisable on dashboards, with KPI alerts.

9. Reporting

RDB ProNet enables you to monitor your KPIs on dashboards in real time, and calculate your gross margin analysis by the metrics you need,

such as by consultant, cost centre, client, site, and sector, enabling you to see how you can increase revenue per consultant.

Throughout my career I have used a number of different recruitment software packages and I would whole heartedly recommend RDB ProNet. Not only does the database have a fantastic diary, the client canvassing and applicant contact management functions are excellent!

Stephen Bowler, Director
Puro Search

Software extensions and 3rd party integrations



92% of hiring managers use social networks when recruiting.

(Career Enlightenment)

When assessing different CRMs, you need to make sure that the platform integrates with both your legacy applications and other tools that you might want to use in the future.

Before choosing one specific solution, it is worth sitting with different members of your organisation to discuss a list of the tools that they would like to work with. For example, marketing will be interested in multi-poster integration, while management typically demands integration with accounts, time-tracking, user analysis, pipeline and business intelligence systems.

Consultants rely on integration with communications software such as call recording, mobile calling apps and email text broadcasting tools, and will also find very useful to be able to display the candidate's personal pages without leaving the CRM.

In this sense, First Choice Software provides their clients with one of the most comprehensive plug-in stores in the recruitment market, where they can download plug-ins and software extensions in a fast and easy way.

In addition, our unique system architecture allows anyone licensed with our software developers kit (SDK) to design and build products that seamlessly blend with RDB ProNet. Products can be free of charge or available with the appropriate subscription

10. Integration is essential

Costing as little as £1 per consultant per day, RDB ProNet is a cost-effective solution to fulfil your recruitment platform needs.

Furthermore, with its intuitive functionality and advanced capabilities winning back 25% of your consultants' time, it demonstrates quick ROI.


// We've used RDB ProNet since 1999 as it adds real value to our IT recruitment consultancy. It really helps us analyse the data and allows us to focus on delivering a first class service. //

Kanu Avasthy,
Marketing Manager
TSR Select

It's time to gain the competitive advantage you need and provide the experience your customers deserve.

Request a demo

We think seeing is believing. Contact us today to discover how RDB ProNet can overcome your most complex business challenges.

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