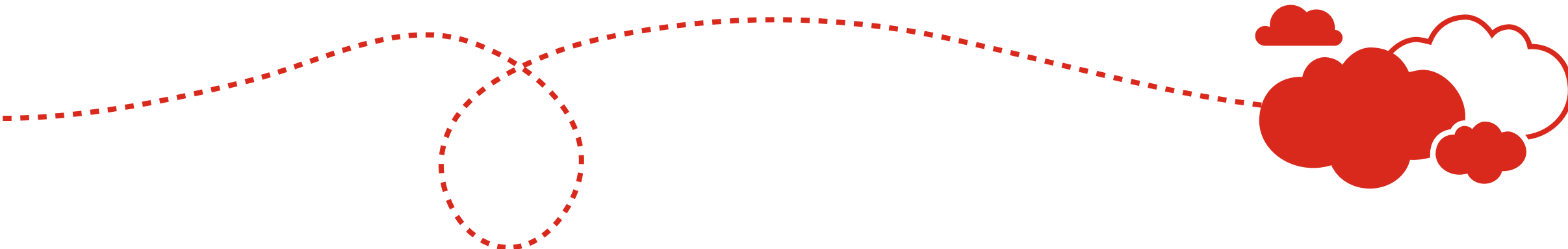


Omni Research

The Modern Candidate Experience Report
May 2023



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Methodology

The following report analyses the results of a survey conducted on-line in April 2023 by Omni RMS.

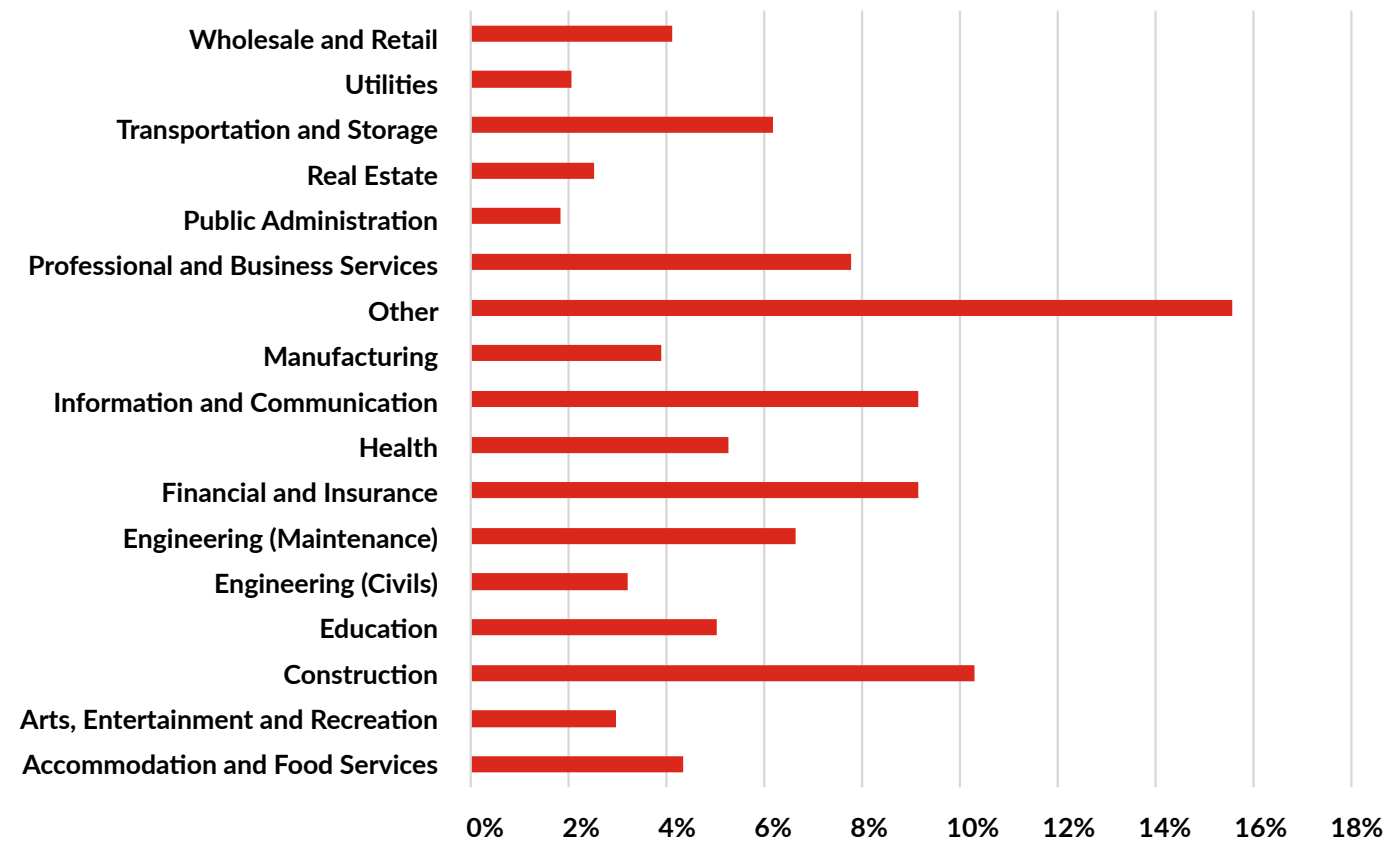
In total 438 people, based in the UK, responded to the survey, along with a further 499 responding through LinkedIn polls.

Public Information

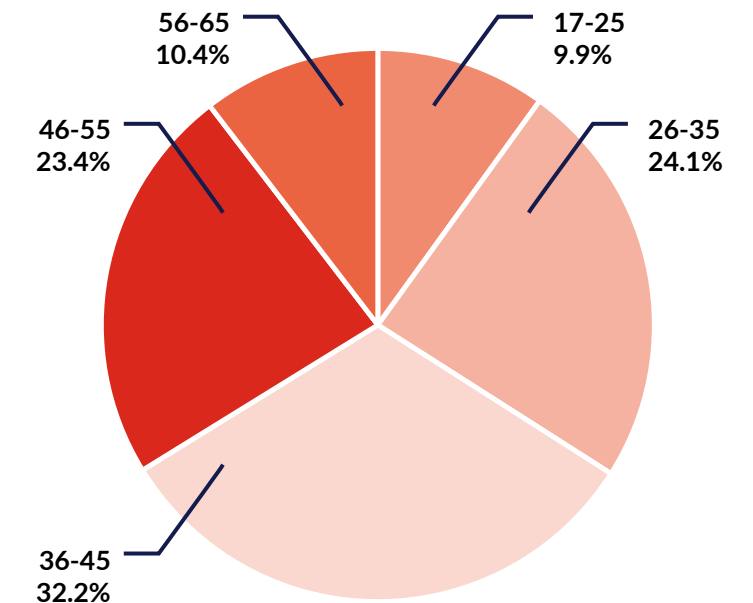
When citing this report, please use the following citation:

Omni RMS (2023) The Modern Candidate Experience Report 2023.

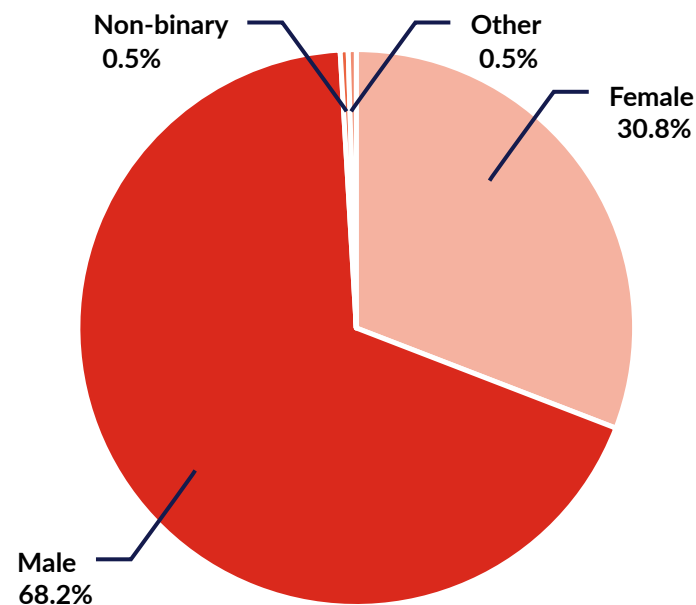
Respondents by industry type



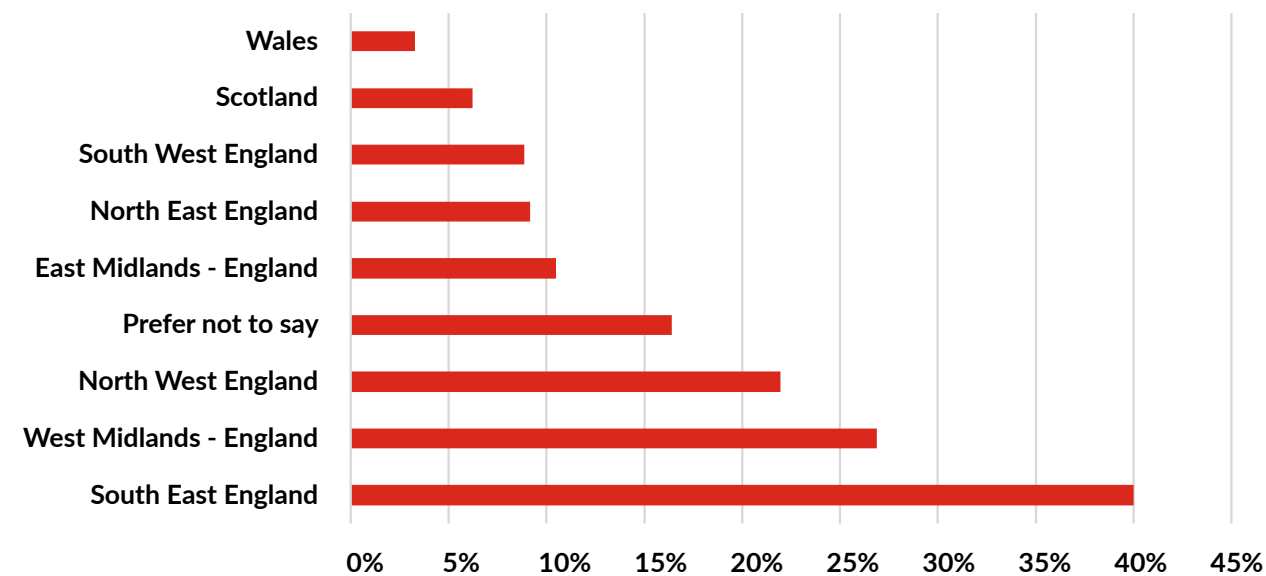
Respondents by age group



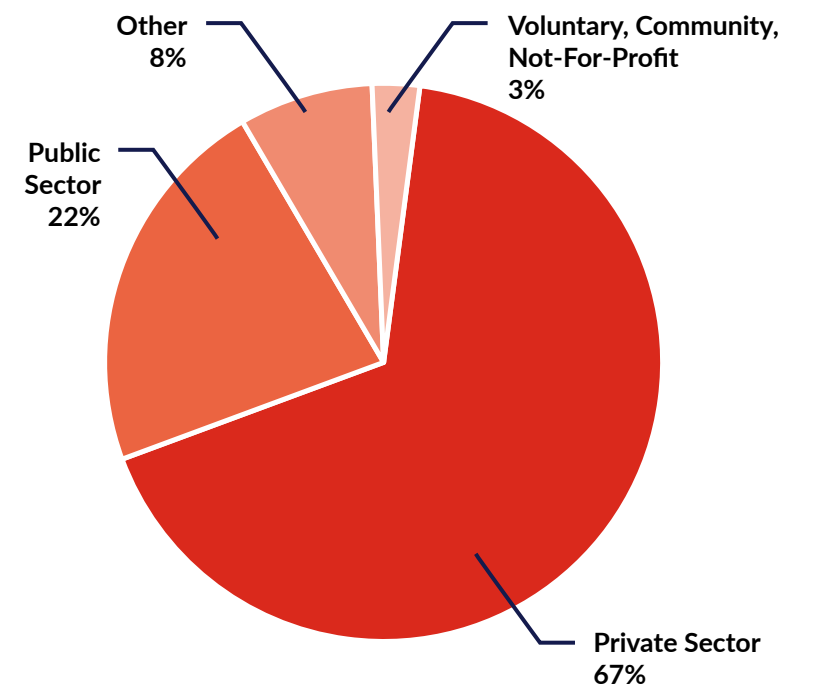
Respondents by gender



Respondents by region



Respondents by sector



Omni Introduction

The recruitment landscape is becoming ever-more complex. We're facing an increasingly competitive talent market, exacerbated by national skills shortages across almost every sector and increasing remuneration expectations as the Cost-of-Living crisis continues to put pressure on household incomes.

While these may be uncertain times, there's one fact that hiring managers, recruiters and employers are all too aware of: hiring the right people is difficult, and it's not going to improve any time soon. Indeed, research from accountancy and business advisory firm, [BDO](#), published in April, revealed that almost half of mid-sized firms in the UK are struggling with skills shortages. A further two-fifths indicated that they have been unable to replace employees who retired during the pandemic.

In this climate, the candidate experience becomes more critical. Never before has it been so important to ensure that potential new recruits aren't put off by the application process or lost to the administration of screening. However, what individuals expect from a business, what motivates their application, and what influences their decision to move into a new role is a constantly moving goal post.

In this report, we take a deep dive into what good looks like from the applicant's point of view to help inform recruitment strategies for the rest of 2023 and beyond. Some results may seem unsurprising, but others do raise flags that indicate the experience, for perhaps too many job seekers, isn't as good as it could be. And employers are seemingly losing out as a result.

Louise Shaw
Managing Director, Omni RMS



In this climate, the candidate experience becomes more critical.

Job move motivators in the modern world

While a decision to move roles will be driven by a range of factors, the job seekers surveyed revealed five top factors that appealed to them when choosing which role to apply for:

- **Pay and benefits on offer (55%)**
- **Career development opportunities (44%)**
- **Working from home / hybrid options (35%)**
- **Flexible working (30%)**
- **Organisational values (25%)**

Although applicants may seemingly be financially driven – which is perhaps unsurprising in the current economic climate – the evolution of working styles over the last few years has clearly left a lasting impact, with the ability to work flexibly, from home, or in a hybrid way is a clear priority for applicants.

It's interesting to note that the motivators of job moves for candidates has remained largely the same on data from last year, when employers were struggling with recruitment due to trends such as the Great Resignation. In fact, in the most recent [Resourcing and Talent Planning Report 2022](#) – produced by Omni RMS and Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD – Pay and Benefits was listed as the most important aspect that would attract a candidate to a new role (cited by 42% of respondents).

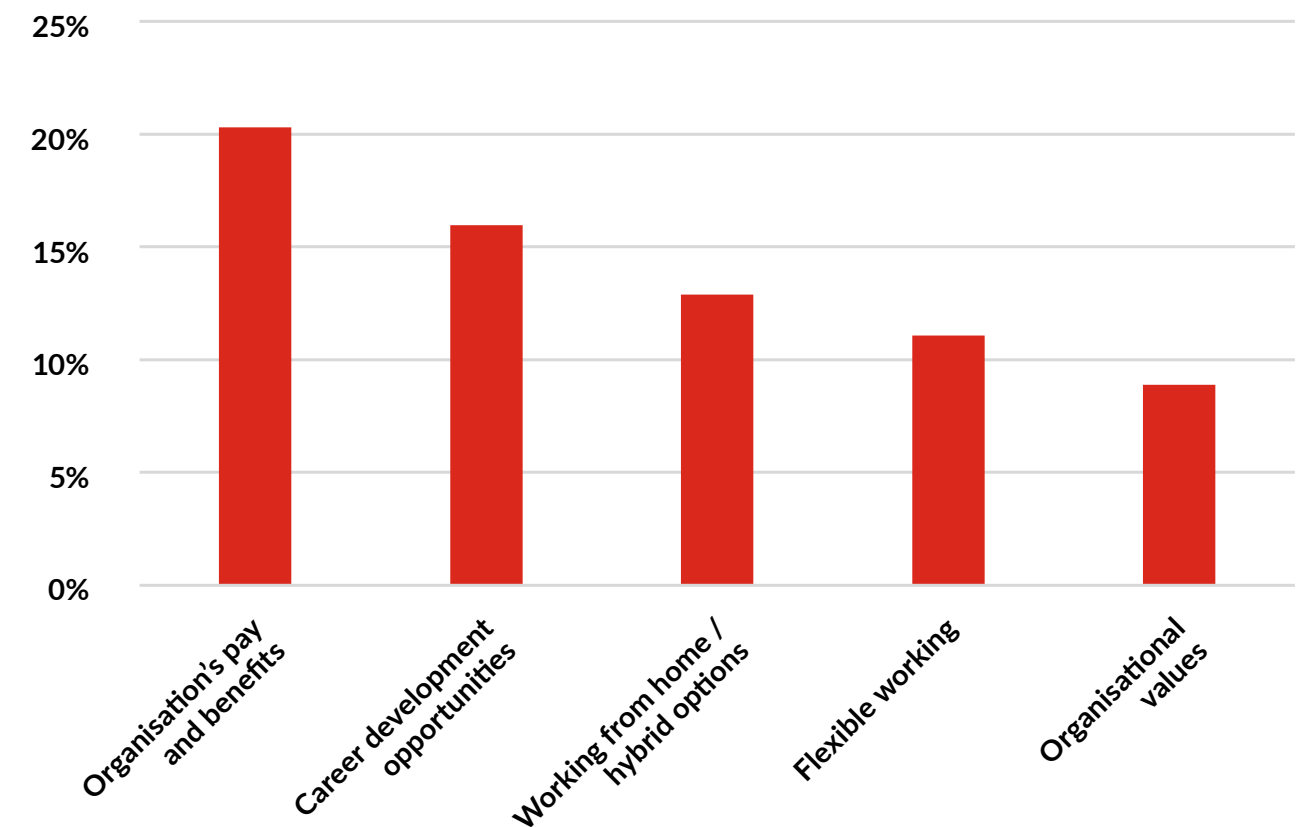
However, if we compare the results of the CIPD and Omni RMS research with the latest data, we can see that career development is now more important to job seekers, moving up from third place in the Resourcing and Talent Planning Report, to second place for today's applicants.

Organisational values remain a key factor in job move decisions – cited by a quarter of respondents in this latest study. Employees are continuing to need a clear connection between their own values and those of the business they plan to work for. In this landscape, the value of a good employer brand becomes even more important, with the ability to demonstrate authenticity, meaningful values and career progression opportunities becoming the deciding factor for applicants and employees, either applying or remaining with an organisation.

However, it is important to note that there are nuances in responses when we break the results down by different demographics. As a case in point, what appeals to job seekers varied by gender. 52% of female respondents selected the ability to work from home/hybrid as a motivator to move jobs, with 46% selecting pay and benefits and 43% selecting career development opportunities as one of their motivators. In comparison, men were more financially driven, with 60% selecting pay and benefits as one of their motivators, 45% selecting career development as a reason for finding a new job and 29% selecting flexible working.

It is interesting to note that when we asked the same question in a public LinkedIn poll, flexible working and remuneration came joint first, which does perhaps suggest that candidates are less inclined to be transparent about the financial incentives – at least on a public platform – than in anonymised studies.

Top 5 - Job move motivators



52% of female respondents selected the ability to work from home/hybrid as a motivator to move jobs.

The candidate journey: Places, preferences and people

While every individual will no doubt have their own preferences around where and how they search for their next role (making the attraction process increasingly complex as this demand for personalised interaction grows) there are some interesting trends we can see around where applicants tend to begin their journey.

Despite the rise of LinkedIn over the course of the last decade (and more), this platform was pipped to the top spot by the job board, Indeed, with 75% of those surveyed more likely to use this website compared to 52% who tend to use LinkedIn. It's important to be mindful of the fact that this is likely to be influenced by a combination of the sector, and level of role, that applicants are looking for. If we look at the demographic breakdown of survey respondents, it's perhaps safe to say that those seeking unskilled, or lower-level technical roles such as in Construction, Transportation or Retail are more likely to use Indeed, while LinkedIn will often be the preferred route for those in professional and more specialist roles such as Finance, Legal and Tech for example.

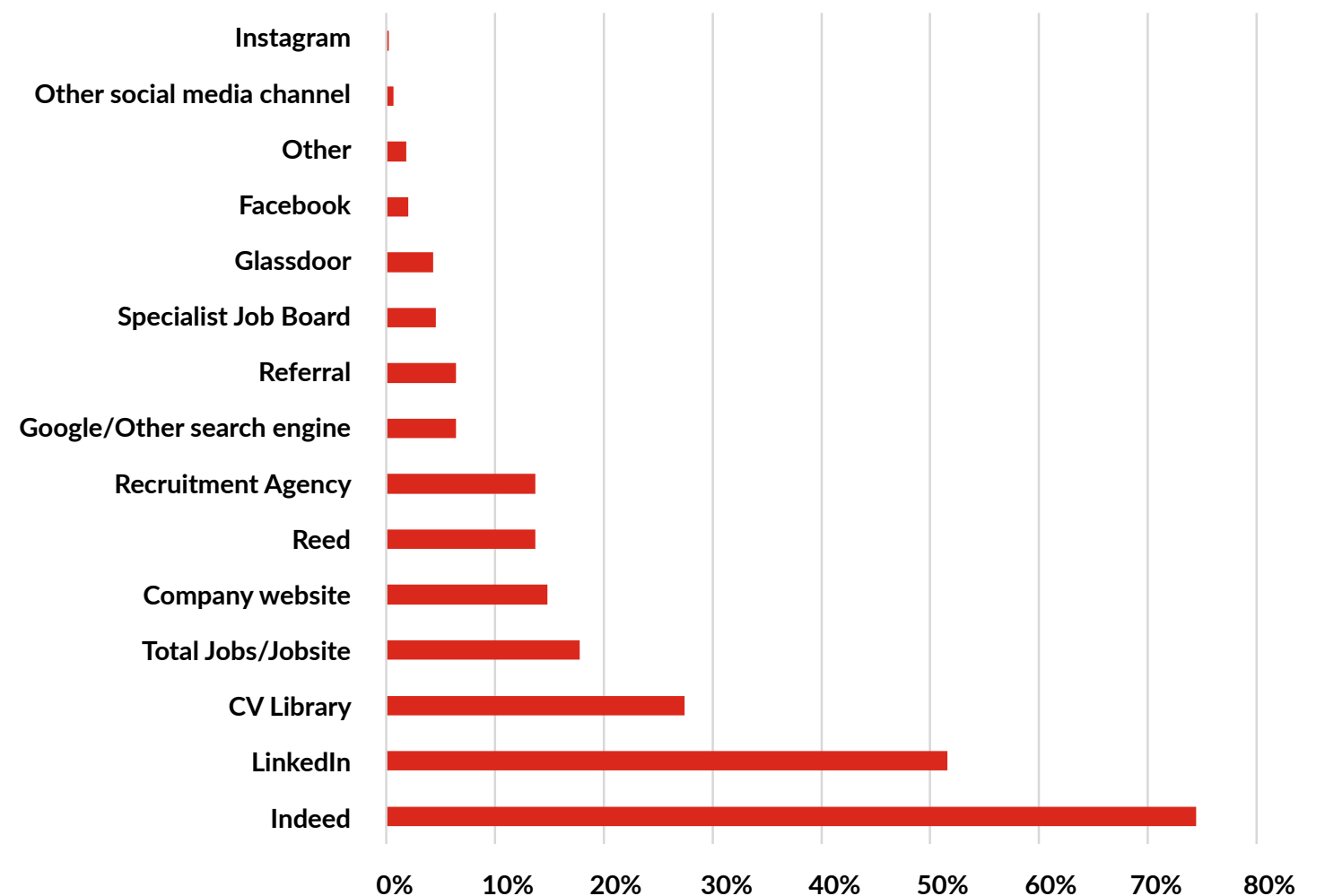
As a case in point, of those we surveyed, professionals in Construction were more likely to use Indeed than any other Industry (outside of those recording their profession as 'Other'). Overall, 30% of those in Construction use Indeed compared to 23% who use LinkedIn.

Those in the Financial & Insurance and Information & Communications sectors were more inclined to use LinkedIn than any other platform, with 36% and 31% of job seekers in each respective sector using this platform to find their next role.

It's also important to add that where and how an organisation can target potential new hires will be dependent on where individuals stand in the candidate journey. Active jobseekers will naturally turn to the likes of Indeed to find a specific role.

However, in a talent-short market, the ability to tap into passive candidates is becoming increasingly important. As these individuals aren't directly pursuing a new role, they will need to be engaged on different platforms and over a longer-period of time. This is where having a strong employer brand presence on LinkedIn, for example, will add more value to a business.

Respondents - Preferred platforms



75% of those surveyed are more likely to use Indeed, with 52% who tend to use LinkedIn.

The candidate journey: Places, preferences and people

It's also important to note that respondents indicated that their reasoning behind their choice in platform isn't driven by whether or not the most appropriate jobs for them are available. In fact, this reason ranked bottom of the options provided, cited by just 10% of respondents.

According to the data, it is the quality of the experience that matters more to their job search. Just under a third (32%) are more likely to choose a platform that makes it easy to find and apply for roles that matter to them, while 29% are influenced by the fact that they know the brand name and a further 27% have either had a positive experience previously or trust the company due to its reputation in the market.

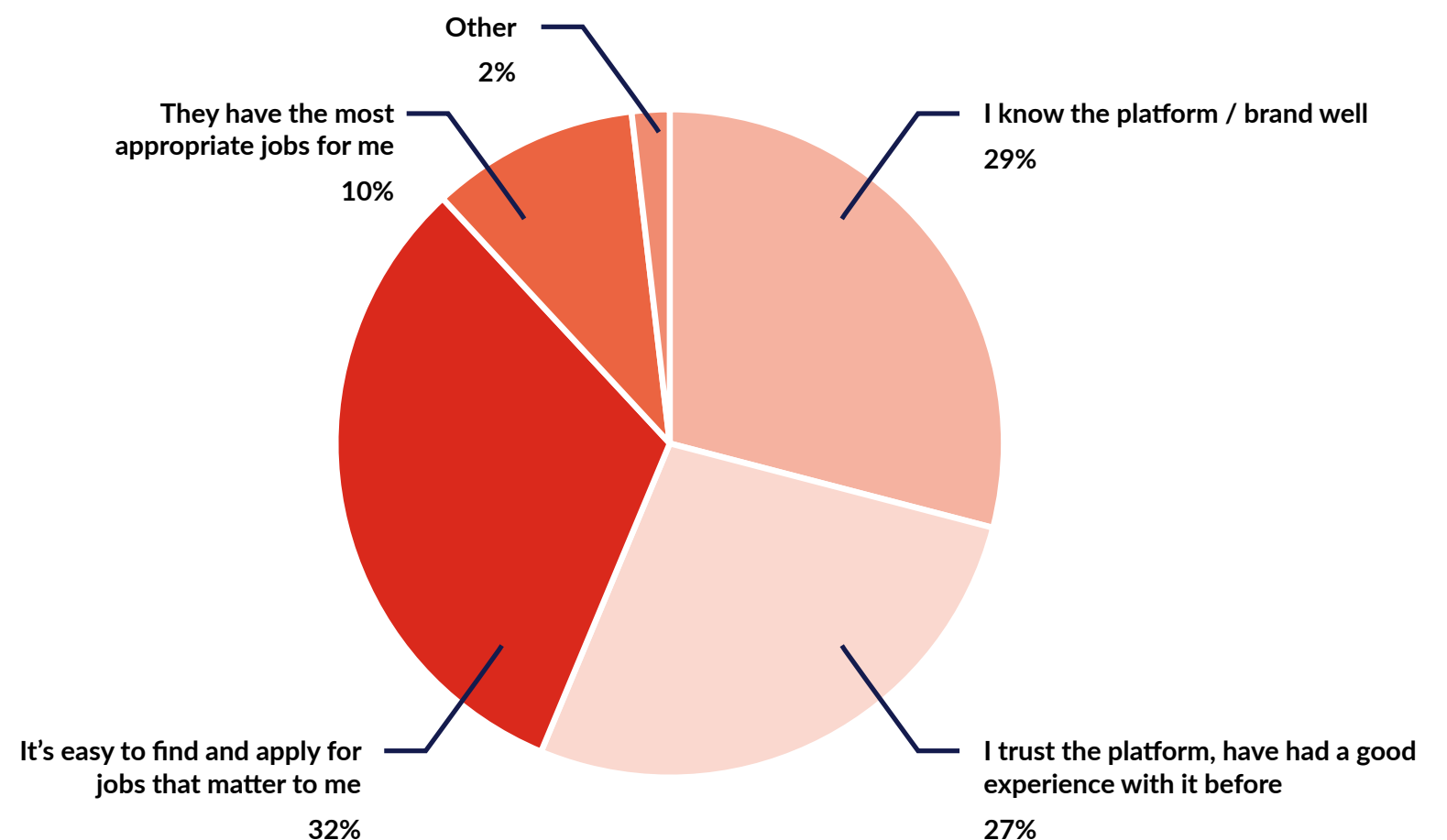
While the notion that candidates are highly influenced by the experience they have from day one of their job search journey isn't new, the fact that the data shows such a distinguishable disparity between access to relevant jobs and the ease of use is a crucial take away from the data. This is a clear sign that hiring strategies are at risk of falling at the first hurdle if the first touch point isn't streamlined and designed with the applicant in mind.

This is further evidenced when we drill down into what impresses candidates during a recruitment process. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the ease of applying was noted as the part of the process that most overwhelmed applicants, cited by 73% of respondents.

While there is quite a gap between the elements that make up the top two spots, the second most impressive element of the job search from a candidate's point of view points to a need for the experience to be top notch. Over a third (38%) of respondents revealed that the communication throughout the process impressed them most.

The handling of interviews both virtually and via phone was also cited as a top impressive feature in respondents recent job hunt, cited by a third of those surveyed.

Why delegates choose a platform



A third (32%) are more likely to choose a platform that makes it easy to find and apply for roles that matter to them.

The elements of a good candidate experience

While there are clear elements of the candidate experience which individuals place more value on, there is room for improvement. When we asked respondents what could have been improved in their last job search, communication was also the top attribute cited.

A third (33%) revealed that they could have had better feedback at each stage while 32% stated that communication throughout the process could be improved. When we consider that there's a range of evidence which suggests that communication in the hiring process is limited, these statistics are even more concerning.

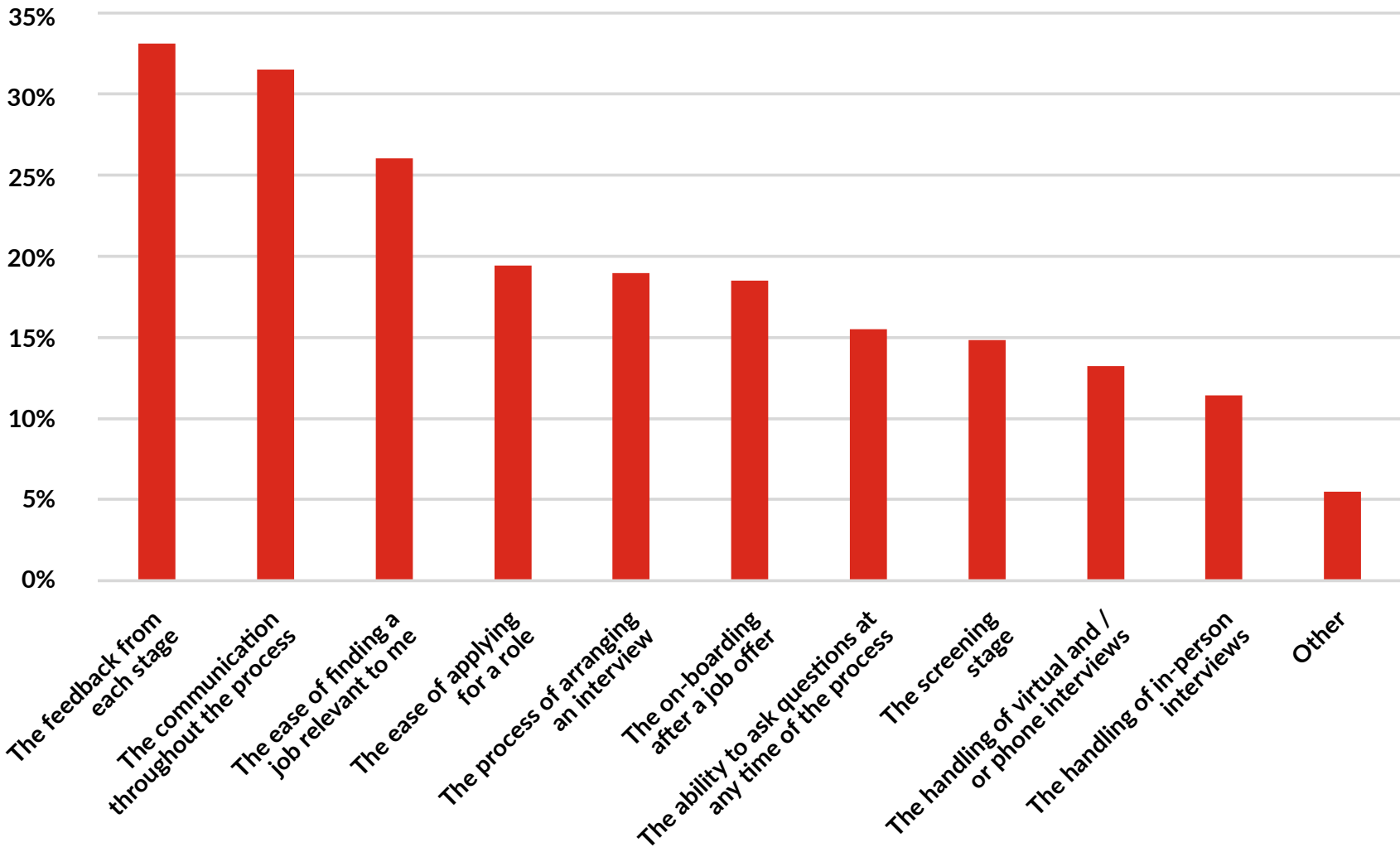
In fact, according to [StandOut CV](#), more than half (52%) of candidates have to wait three months or more for a response to a job application and a further 63% of job seekers are unhappy with the lack of communication.

A further 78% of job seekers have reportedly never been asked for feedback on their candidate experience, which further points to communication being limited in the recruitment journey.

This lack of communication will limit the success of hiring strategies which are already under pressure. In fact, in the latest [Resourcing and Talent Planning Report](#) – produced in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) – we found that 77% of businesses are experiencing candidate attraction difficulties.

When we further drill down into the attributes of the job search which will impact the candidate experience, the importance of a positive experience is further evidenced. The ease of finding a relevant job and a simplified application process both ranked highly by 26% and 20% of candidates respectively.

Most important elements for the application process



63% of job seekers are unhappy with the lack of communication.

Drivers of job offer success

With the data pointing to the significant influence the candidate experience can have on applicants, it's perhaps unsurprising to note that the majority (59%) of respondents would consider leaving the recruitment process if they experience poor communication or feedback from recruiters and hiring managers.

Speed is also clearly of the essence, with more than half (56%) revealing that they would consider dropping out if the process itself took too long.

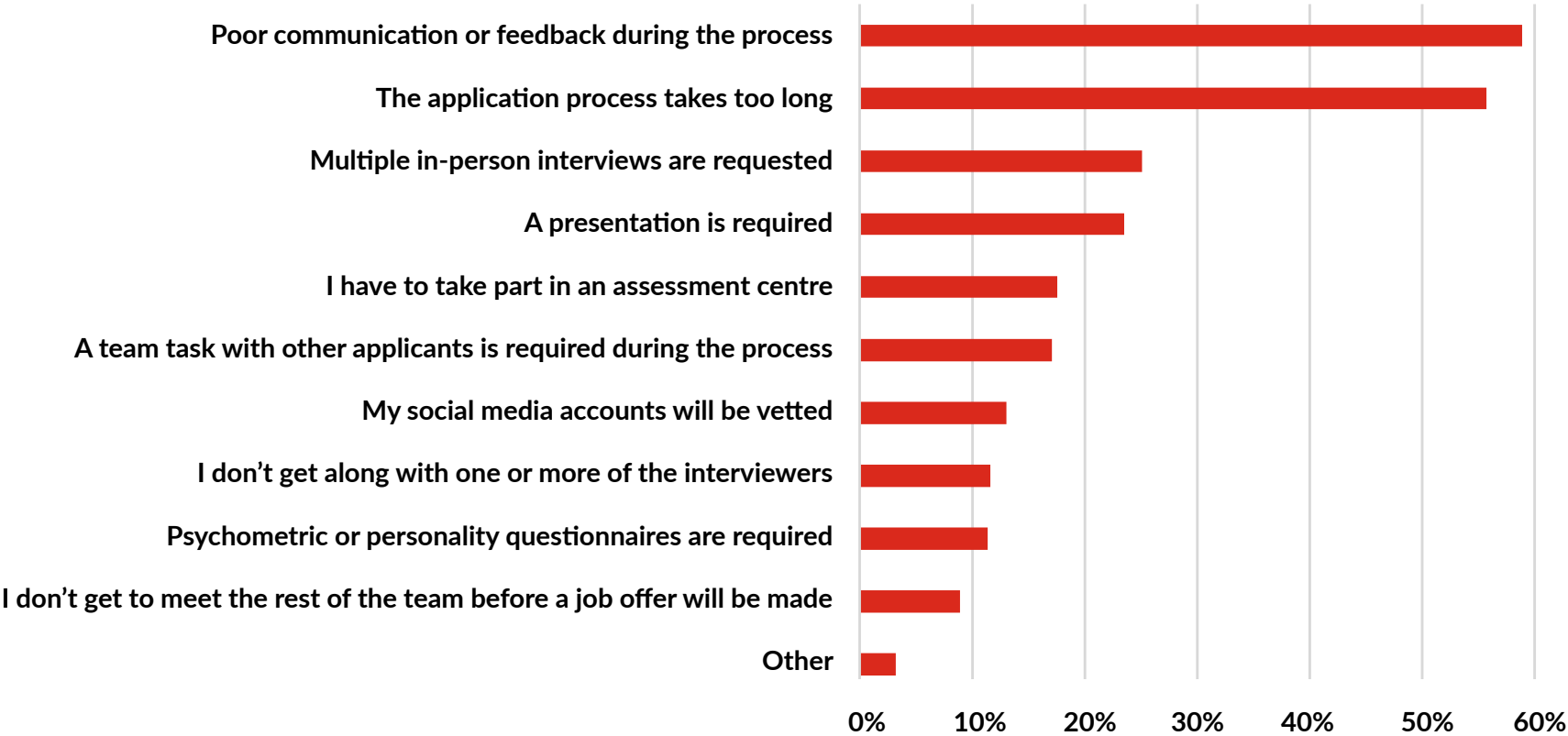
When we consider that the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that there are still more than one million open vacancies across the UK, this is perhaps unsurprising. Candidates continue to have more choice in the job market and those employers that are unable to move quickly will lose top talent to the competition.

What is interesting to note is the influence that certain elements of the recruitment process can have on candidate sentiment. Applicants are seemingly put off by both multiple in-person interviews and being required to host a presentation during the process, cited by 25% and 24% of respondents respectively. While the need for this will vary by both sector and job role, the fact that so many recruitment processes will require at least one of these suggests there are elements of the hiring journey that candidates are unhappy with, that perhaps haven't made the hiring team's list of considerations.

There are also sector nuances to be aware of. For example, respondents operating in the Construction industry are more likely to be put off the process by poor communication, while those in Accommodation & Food Services and Transportation & Storage are more influenced by the length of the recruitment journey than anything else. Multiple in-person interviews are also more likely to be an issue for those in the Financial & Insurance remits than any other industry.

More than half (56%) of applicants would consider dropping out if the process itself took too long.

Reasons job seekers drop out of the application process



Drivers of job offer success

Of those applicants that do make it through to the job offer stage, their experience in the process will influence their decision to accept the role. The top factor cited by respondents as reasons to accept an offer were how responsive the brand was during the hiring process (28%).

Pay does, however, appear to be the top driver of job acceptance decisions. Almost half (46%) would be influenced in their decision to reject a role if the pay on offer was different to that initially advertised.

It should be noted that employers do appear to recognise that competitive pay is a priority in the skills shortage market the UK continues to experience.

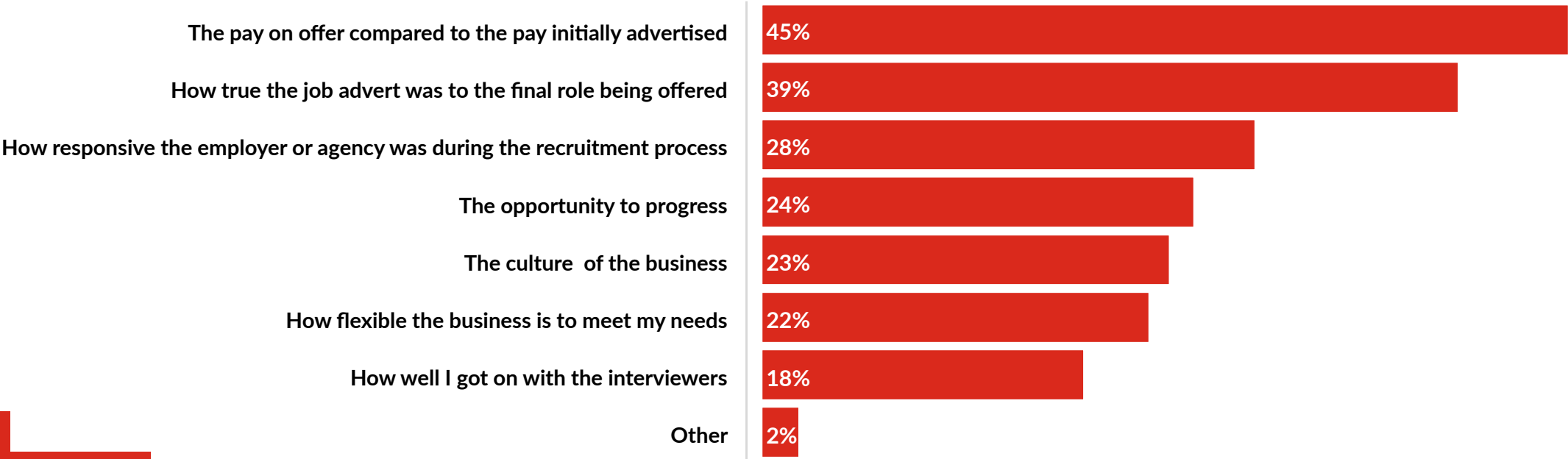
According to the businesses we surveyed as part of the Resourcing and Talent Planning Report with the CIPD, an increased proportion of organisations are offering better pay and/or benefits to address recruitment difficulties (36%). However, with the Cost-of-Living crisis continuing to impact the UK population, employers will increasingly face remuneration pressures as applicants capitalise on the stability of the recruitment market to command better pay.

However, a lack of transparency also appears to be influencing job acceptance rates. Over a third (39%) of those surveyed revealed that they would be more inclined to reject a position if the role being offered differed from the initial advert.

With the top two reasons to reject a job offer being linked to honesty and transparency, ensuring everything from the job specification, advert, interview process, through to the final role offered are aligned is clearly crucial to recruitment success.

There are also variances across genders in terms of what influences a job acceptance. The top factor driving male candidates when considering a job is the pay on offer, compared to the remuneration initially advertised. In comparison, women report to be more driven by how true the job advert was to the position offered (though note that pay came in a close second).

Reasons candidates reject job offers



Almost half (46%) would be influenced in their decision to reject a role if the pay on offer was different to that initially advertised.

Improving the candidate experience: What's needed?

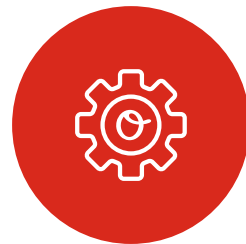
It's clear that there is room for improvement in the candidate experience – at least from the applicant's perspective. But what needs to change to ensure prospective candidates aren't lost as a result?

If we round up the analysis of what the survey respondents are saying, there are five key factors to be addressed:



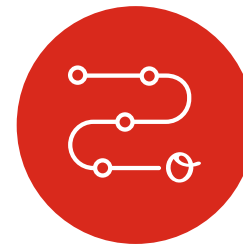
Communication & Experience

Applicants are clearly feeling left in the dark when it comes to regular updates from the hirer or recruiter during the recruitment process. Communication needs to be consistent and regular to keep people engaged with the brand, demonstrate they are valued individuals and, perhaps more importantly, ensure that the applicant know who they can reach out to at any stage of the process. This will aid the potential for individuals to contact the employer rather than drop out from the recruitment journey altogether if there is an issue or concern.



Speed

With competition for the best skills rife, a fast and efficient recruitment process can benefit all parties, but it's important not to scrimp on compliance or compromise on quality by making it too fast. Technology can add real value in this instance. Everything from using chatbots, to answering candidate enquiries, or scheduling tools to arrange meetings, can improve hiring speeds by eliminating some of the human blockers that commonly stall the process.



Transparency

It's clear from the survey responses that there can sometimes be a discrepancy between the job or pay advertised and the end role on offer. There needs to be complete transparency and absolute consistency throughout the hiring process to prevent this disjointed experience from continuing. This includes rethinking job specifications, if it becomes apparent that the role requirements are different. There are still too many instances where old job specifications are used due to ease or speed requirements, however these can clearly be detrimental to recruitment success in the longer term and will limit your target talent audience. Reviewing your job specification can be the first opportunity to really widen your talent pool and create a more inclusive talent pool.



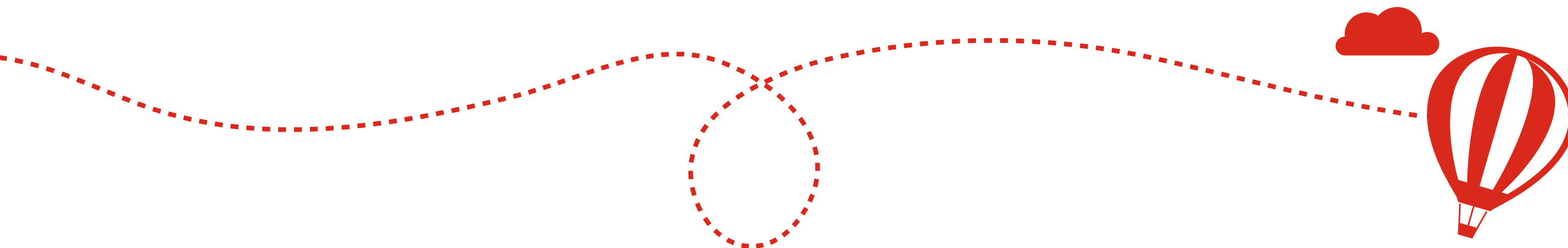
Employer Brand

While consistency is needed, personalisation and the understanding of your organisation's employer brand shouldn't be overlooked. There are clear discrepancies between what job applicants expect from the recruitment experience, and what they want from an employer, based on gender, sector and much more. It's important to be able to understand the unique motivators of your target audiences and ensure that tailored hiring campaigns are running simultaneously. Your employer brand is key to unlocking and targeting the diverse talent you need.



On-going tracking

While it's unlikely that candidates will be acutely aware of this step in the best recruitment processes, the ability to constantly track, monitor and assess the candidate experience has significant value long-term. Not only are you able to identify where applicants are dropping out of the process and make appropriate adjustments, but it also helps to create a more robust hiring process and strategy overall. The motivators of candidates will continue to evolve and it's important that every business stays on top of the trends in their sector.



Summary

Achieving all the above is no easy task, particularly when the goal posts are constantly moving. We recognise that for employers, talent and attraction is becoming more complex and knowing what tech tools to invest in, where to target certain demographics and, indeed, what candidates want from a business isn't easy to define.

At Omni, we work with organisations to identify their resourcing effectiveness and benchmark against best practice. We have expertise in delivering results across the entire talent resourcing lifecycle and are constantly looking at how we can do more to better inform the hiring decisions of organisations across every sector.

This report is the first in several insights we plan to publish to help organisations create a strong employer brand and deliver a more impactful talent acquisition strategy. However, what good looks like for your organisation will vary to that of others.

If you're struggling to navigate the current hiring landscape, we would welcome a discussion on the challenges you face to help us provide further insight to support your businesses.

Get in touch

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**We change the way organisations
resource for the better.**