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Resident workshop

What will my TA function look like in 5 years?

The stage

Shaping the future now



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The best practice for what a TA function will look like in 5 years hasn't been defined yet...

People often follow best practice.

However, we are at a crossroads, and for those brave enough, there is an opportunity to become the best practice.

30+ senior TA leaders came together to step away from the day-to-day and exchange ideas and map out the future.



The model

Challenging perspectives



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We had x3 TedTalk style presentations

Chris Pidgeon

Snr Director, TA @ IHG Hotels



Undeniable Value

Ben Rutter

Founder of House of Visionaries
Managing Director @ Bond Global



Future Op Model

Cheryl White

Talent Acquisition Director @ Tide



Talent Clouds



We then opened out the conversation and mapped across 3 time horizons

1-2 years

2-5 years

5+ years

Workshop sponsored by:

1-2 years



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What will be true?

Slower adoption of AI than anticipated.

Candidates using AI faster than vendors and TA teams can react to

Small orgs moving fast, larger ones grappling with governance

Acceptable AI use policy becomes mainstream

Screening, notetaking, scheduler tools gateway products for what's to come

Combatting unacceptable practice will be mainstream

Download full report on candidates using AI and what to do about it.

Rise of the "Talent Engineer" - a dedicated resource for AI implementation in process

Sourcers UP and co-ordinators down

In 2 years bots will actively assist and be present in interviews

TA is nudging toward becoming a business driver (e.g. profit centre thinking)

There's a shift away from outsourcing and toward in-house capability building

What will we do about it?

Build L+D programmes for upskilling TA teams

Sharpen Hiring Manager training around acceptable AI use by candidates

TA teams building internal engineering, ops, and experimentation capability

Prompt engineering and data quality become areas of focus

1-2 years



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In the next two years, TA will get smarter, faster, and leaner, but only if we can outrun our candidates.

There's a growing consensus that AI is becoming embedded in everyday TA functions, particularly in high-volume and top-of-funnel activity (e.g. scheduling, sourcing, candidate comms). But adoption is still patchy, especially in larger companies with slower governance processes.

Teams are shifting from reactive recruitment to building product-style function, involving TA engineers, experimentation, prompt engineering, and recruitment ops. Many mentioned moving toward scalable, automated infrastructure to do more with fewer people.

2 - 5 years

Smaller teams, bigger levers. TA won't just recruit, they'll engineer the entire talent experience.

TA functions will shrink, but individual output will grow via automation. AI will allow greater volume of hires per recruiter, especially at the low- to mid-skill level.

However, with automation increasing, governance, measurement, and scorecard design become pivotal. The tools may scale hiring, but the human inputs will ensure it's quality hiring.

Digital exclusion is a rising concern. Privacy, trust, and transparency become non-negotiables in a world where bots are influencing decisions.

TA becomes custodial. In a world where AI runs parts of the process, TA steps up to be the voice of the business, of culture, and of inclusion

2 – 5 years



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What will be true?

TA teams will shrink but output will increase through AI augmentation

Beefed up scorecards become essential for quality assurance

Governance will catch up. Legislation and AI rules more defined

Coordinators phased out. Engineers and sourcers in

TA will increasingly own procurement, tech, and delivery

AI native tech vendors prevail over legacy incumbants

Digital exclusion and AI ethics become an issue

TA as culture carriers and change agents, representing values, tone, and ethics

Shift to “bot-to-bot” for low-skill, high-volume hiring

CVs evolving into interactive or bot-led formats

What will we do about it?

Build new frameworks that account for AI involvement (e.g. bot-screened CVs, AI-assisted interviews) and emphasise consistency, fairness, and bias reduction.

Audit on digital exclusion risks. Identify roles and candidate pools at risk of being disadvantaged by digital-first or AI-led processes. Design parallel human routes or hybrid workflows.

Procure better and smarter to reduce risks and maintain competitive edge

Audit current hiring scorecards and success metrics

5+ years



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What will be true?

TA as a standalone function fades; talent becomes a full lifecycle, cross-functional discipline

Elite candidates choose how they apply. The experience must be modular, inclusive, and channel-agnostic

Immutable, blockchain-style records of candidate history may underpin trust

Bots talk to bots. Near full automation in some segments (especially tech). Human in loop as per regulations

Talent Engineers evolve into product owners, overseeing orchestration and AI assurance

New regulation will define thresholds and frameworks for “fair AI use” in hiring

AI heavily influences hiring decisions. Humans oversee ethics and guardrails

What will we do about it?

Map out the candidate journey and introduce modularity and flexibility: voice vs text, bot vs human, fast-track vs immersive routes

Identify team members to take ownership of key TA tech and processes. Empower them to run those platforms like products i.e continuously improving the user journey

Build a lightweight governance framework for AI usage in hiring, ethical guardrails, transparency checkpoints, and bias testing. Consider forming an “AI Ethics Panel” with HR, Legal. Evolve it as regulation emerges

Position TA as the connector, not just the entry point. This helps dissolve the traditional boundaries of the function

5+ years



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TA as we know it... disappears

The dissolution of the “TA function” as a standalone concept. Instead, talent becomes embedded across the lifecycle, from attraction to development to retention. TA morphs into a strategic orchestration layer, not an admin arm.

As AI takes on more power, trust structures will need to evolve. AI assurance, fair use policies, and immutable candidate histories (e.g. via blockchain) start becoming feasible and desirable. TA’s role will be to guarantee fairness and transparency, not just outcomes.

Top talent are expected to choose their own experience. The channel, the tech, the level of interaction. Organisations will design with flexibility, autonomy, and accessibility baked in from the start.

The big picture

There is no single, fixed future for Talent Acquisition. But there is enormous change and we are the ones behind the wheel. TA doesn’t just fill seats, it builds systems, communities, and capability.

- ✓ we’ll be asked to move faster, get sharper, and rewire how our teams work.
- ✓ fewer people, but more purpose. Less admin, more engineering.
- ✓ we’ll start to own our tech, and engineer experiences
- ✓ we’ll act as the guardians of trust, inclusion, and candidate care
- ✓ the stakes get higher, scorecards matter more, our influence deepens

Looking 5+ years out? It’s not science fiction, it’s a blank canvas. Bots talking to bots. Candidates choosing their own adventure. A world where TA is no longer a function, but a mindset threaded across the whole talent lifecycle.

We’re not waiting to be told what the future looks like. We’re co-designing it.

One policy, one experiment, one decision at a time.

Let’s keep building. 

Where next...

The community is co-created and we
will always design the value add
experiences you need.

Reach out to the team to kick around
your future focused ideas...

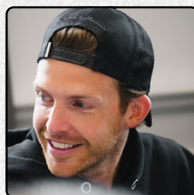
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