# Do Recruiters rely too heavily on technology to match candidates to roles?

Whilst we are far from being technophobes, having had successful careers, and built companies, within high tech industries, we have also learnt that in recruitment it pays to look deeper than the words on the CV.

This article highlights the pitfalls of relying on software to *'read a CV'* and match candidates to roles. We cannot remain stuck in the dark ages, but we mustn't forget the human factor, we have brains and we use them.

There is no "Computer says no" here at ATB.
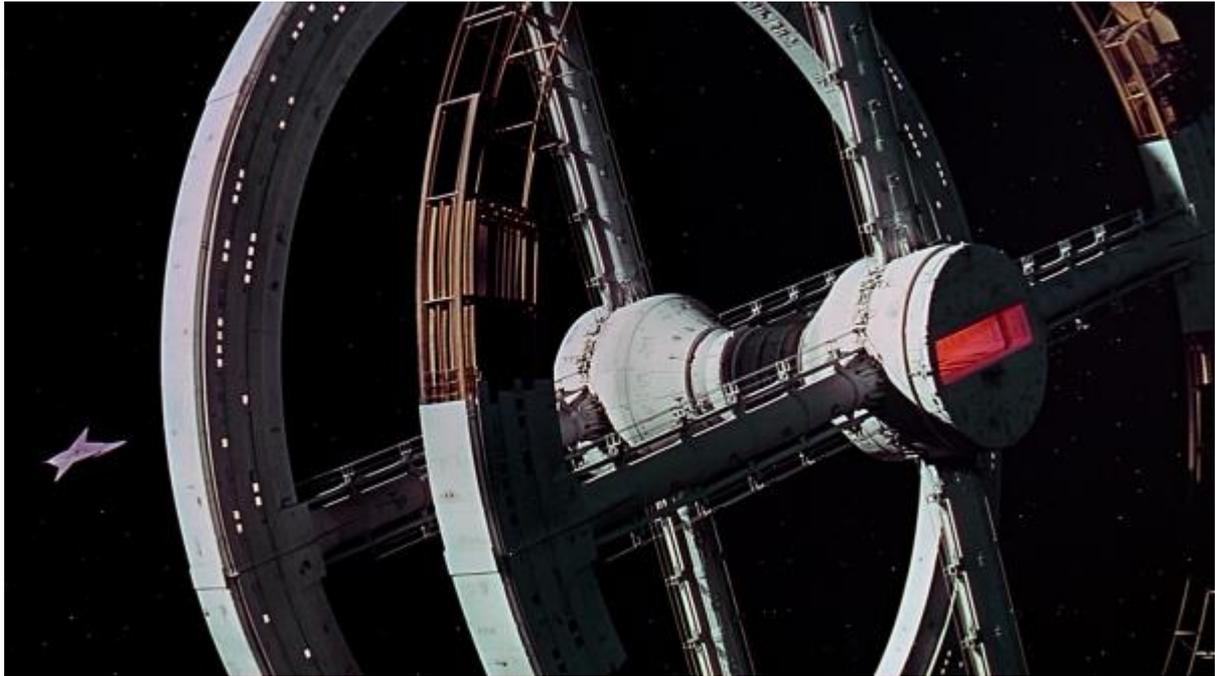
It's been the subject of a million sci-fi films, from The Terminator to 2001: A Space Odyssey, but the fear that mankind will one day be replaced by machines is not just fantasy. Just take the world of recruitment, in which an overreliance on technology is not only threatening to transform employer specialists into mere administrators, but also turning some of the most important values of the whole process into something of a lost art…

The role of technology in recruitment

It's undeniable that technology plays a crucial role in modern recruitment – but it is far from a simple one if you hold it up to scrutiny.

"The role of technology in recruitment is quite a complex topic because it is so diverse," explains James Innes, Chairman at CVCentre.co.uk and author of The CV Book. "It can encompass everything from recruiters using social media to identify and screen candidates, through to the use of applicant-tracking systems (ATS) and/or software to shortlist CVs."

Are the old ways the best?

The pros for recruiters having access to ATS are obvious but the main one is worth repeating: there are things that technology can simply do faster than people. "One of the most important reasons why employers are increasingly utilising technology in recruitment is to streamline the process, making it more efficient and less labour-intensive," says James. "Software such as ATS is useful in pre-screening and identifying those who are the best match for a particular position." Useful? Yes. But foolproof? Hardly.

"An ATS is looking only for keywords in a CV," clarifies James, "but they may skip over candidates who are an almost perfect match but who do have either the ideal attitude or personality to suit the employer's business."

The human element

What is missing, obviously, is the element of human intuition that comes from someone spending time reading a CV and really considering the real person behind it. And this is just one way in which an overreliance on technology may constitute bad practice. "Recruiters increasingly turn to social media to identify

candidates, in particular LinkedIn, but it must be borne in mind that there is still a percentage of the population with limited access to the internet and technology," continues James. "Also, some people simply may not be tech-savvy and will therefore rely much more on traditional methods of recruitment, which therefore shouldn't be overlooked completely."

Technology, then, may screen greater numbers of applications more quickly than a human, but it might not be screening the right people in the first place. Likewise, consider the importance of communication in the recruitment process and you soon realise that people are simply irreplaceable.

"For example, when it comes to writing a compelling job posting, there is no substitute for human involvement," argues James. "Indeed, the best postings are often produced with the help of marketing or creative teams rather than simply recruiters or managers. But you can then use technological advancements, such as Google Analytics, to ensure that common search terms are utilised effectively so that your posting reaches the widest audience."

Recruitment: a balancing act

What it boils down to, ultimately, is a question of using technology to assist and refine the recruitment process, not dominate it.

"People and computers should work together to ensure a company attracts the best candidates," says James, before hitting the nail on the head: "Innovation in technology should not be considered as a permanent alternative to human involvement in the recruitment and selection process."

Here at ATB we stand by our strap-line *"People not CV's"*. We have placed a number of our "people" with clients even though the CV wasn't matched to the role by our systems! We have been in business long enough to know that someone with a certain skill will have acquired others on the way to achieving that skill. If the recruiter, through no fault of their own, lacks business experience, or works in a volume recruitment business, they have no choice but to rely on their systems to find matches.

We read every CV and when we see a word, title, or description that we know systems don't recognise we add the terminology that will be found when we next search. We call people and talk through their career, you would be surprised how much relevant information is missing from peoples' CV's.

Some organisations give their employees some very strange job titles, often specific to the company. If I called our Recruitment Consultants "Across-the-Boarders", which is a great name, and then I use that title in a job search, no system will match them to a vacancy for a recruiter!!

If you think you could benefit from some free advice about your CV, get in touch with us and just ask.