Hey! What's New? 2026-58

AI Is the Root of Recruiters' Biggest Stressors, Survey Says

Employ Inc., a leading provider of people-first, intelligent hiring solutions across JazzHR, Lever and Jobvite, published the *2026 Recruiter Nation* report, "Recruiter Recalibration: Resetting the Hiring Playbook." The report reveals that "recruiting teams face a new set of challenges around candidate quality, AI-polished applications, candidate fraud and technology gaps."

The report's findings point to a recruiting landscape that is becoming less reactive, despite ongoing complexities. "More tempered hiring activity has given teams the room to evaluate their processes and technology they have built over the last several years and determine whether those investments are making meaningful differences: helping them identify qualified candidates, reduce friction, use AI effectively, and connect recruiting performance to broader business outcomes."

The *2026 Recruiter Nation* report is based on a nationwide survey of more than 1,200 U.S.-based HR recruiters and managers conducted by Zogby Analytics on behalf of Employ in August 2026. But findings are likely similar in Canada, the UK and European countries.

Findings from the *2026 Recruiter Nation* report include:

- **The hiring market is stabilizing but at a moderate scale. "**Nearly three-quarters of HR decision-makers (74%) report increased hiring activity, while 60% expect to make more hires over the next 12 months, down from 70% in 2025. Recruiting budgets show a similar shift, with 51% expecting budgets to increase, down from 67% last year."
- **The pressure points are shifting. "**Just 36% say recruiting is more stressful than it was a year ago, down from 45% in 2025 and 54% in 2024. Among recruiters who feel less stressed, investment in AI-powered recruiting technology and the ability to meet candidate expectations tie as the most frequently cited reasons, at 28% each. But just because recruiting isn't getting more stressful doesn't mean recruiters aren't still feeling the pressure."
- **Candidate quality is the top priority.** "Improving candidate quality is the leading recruiting priority (43%), while identifying and prioritizing qualified candidates is the top recruiting challenge (30%)."
- **AI is making recruiting easier, but not eliminating administrative work. "**Sixty-eight percent of recruiters use AI alongside their recruiting technology, and 66% say it has made their jobs easier. Yet only 18% say more than half of their time has shifted from administrative work to higher-value tasks."
- **Candidate fraud is on the rise.** "More than one-quarter of organizations (27%) report confirmed AI-driven candidate fraud, up from 23% in 2025. Among teams that have encountered confirmed or suspected fraud, half estimate they have received more than 50 fraudulent applications."
- **AI is also causing headaches. "**For the first time in the 19-year history of this survey, the biggest source of recruiter stress is tied to AI. AI-polished resumes now top the list at 33%, overtaking a lack of qualified candidates, which had long held the position as top stressor."

- **Recruiting teams are reassessing their technology. "**Satisfaction with primary recruiting systems fell from 82% in 2025 to 69% this year, while 64% say they are at least somewhat likely to make a change within the next 12 to 24 months. Friction and avoidable delays are still showing up at key moments that lead to candidate drop off."
- **AI governance is a bigger priority. "**Nearly half of HR decision-makers (47%) have formal guidelines for how recruiters use AI, while another 30% are developing them. Forty-four percent also have guidelines for candidate AI use."
- **Recruiting data needs to demonstrate business impact. "**Eighty-one percent of HR decision-makers use analytics to improve recruiting strategy, but only 47% are very or extremely confident their data helps communicate TA's business impact to executive leadership."

"Recruiting teams have spent the last few years locked into reaction mode," says Jerry Jao, CEO at Employ. "Adjusting to one drastic market swing after the next. But as some of those pressures begin to ease, teams have the opportunity to step back and assess how their processes, technology, and AI investments are working for them. The next phase of recruiting will be about giving teams better ways to identify talent, verify what candidates can do, and make confident decisions without adding more friction to the hiring process."

The *2026 Recruiter Nation* report is available at [2026 Recruiter Nation Report: The Recruiter Recalibration | Lever].