

HR RESEARCH SERIES 2026 - REPORT R03 OF 10 (EXTENDED)

# Recruiting Metrics: The Complete Playbook

Every KPI talent acquisition teams need to measure, with European benchmarks and board-ready presentation.

Talent acquisition is one of the most poorly measured functions in most organisations. Despite hiring being among the most strategically consequential activities a business undertakes, most HR teams cannot answer basic financial questions about their recruitment function: what does a hire cost, how long does it take, what quality do we achieve.



Published: May 2026 - tenperzent.com - Report R03 of 10 (Extended)

The most common failure is measuring activity (applications received, interviews conducted) rather than outcomes (hire quality, business impact, cost efficiency). Activity metrics feel like accountability but provide no strategic insight.

## The recruiting metrics hierarchy

Recruiting metrics fall into four tiers: efficiency (time, cost), effectiveness (quality, fit), experience (candidate, hiring manager) and business impact (revenue per hire, retention contribution). Every TA function should track at least one metric per tier.

## The 10 metrics every TA team must track

Metric	Definition	European benchmark
Time-to-fill	Days from req open to offer accept	34 days median
Time-to-hire	Days from candidate apply to accept	23 days median
Cost-per-hire (true)	All direct + indirect costs / hires	€8,400 median
Offer acceptance rate	Offers accepted / offers extended	82% median
Source-of-hire	% of hires per channel	Referral 22% / job board 31%
Application-to-hire ratio	Applications / hires	118 : 1 median
Quality-of-hire	90-day manager rating	Tracked by 19% of teams
First-year retention	% retained after 12 months	81% median
Diversity of hire	% from underrepresented groups	Varies by sector
Hiring manager satisfaction	NPS from hiring managers	+18 median

## Calculating true cost-per-hire

Only 32% of European TA teams can calculate their true cost-per-hire including indirect costs, the majority underestimate it by 40–60%. The full formula includes recruiter time, hiring manager time, agency fees, advertising, technology, referral bonuses, background checks, relocation and signing bonuses.

**Rule of thumb: if your reported cost-per-hire is below €4,000 for a professional role in Europe, you are almost certainly under-measuring it.**

## Quality-of-hire, the most important metric you're not tracking

Quality-of-hire is the single most important TA metric and is tracked by only 19% of European HR teams, primarily because it requires HRIS-ATS integration that most organisations lack. The most practical proxy is a 90-day manager rating combined with 12-month retention.

- **90-day manager rating**, simple 1–5 scale, asked at the same point post-hire for every role.
- **12-month retention**, did this person still want to be here after a year.
- **Performance review score**, first formal review benchmark vs. role peers.
- **Promotion velocity**, time to first promotion or expanded scope.

## Building a TA metrics dashboard

A well-designed TA metrics dashboard reduces time spent on reporting by 4.3 hours per week per recruiter while improving decision quality. The dashboard should refresh automatically, expose the same data to TA, hiring managers and finance, and answer three questions on the front page: are we hiring fast enough, are we hiring well, are we hiring efficiently.

## Presenting TA metrics to the board

- **Lead with business impact**, hires-vs-plan, revenue contribution from new hires, retention gains.
- **Translate efficiency into euros**, cost saved vs. last year, agency dependency reduction.
- **Show quality, not just quantity**, 90-day rating trend, first-year retention by source.
- **Anticipate the question**, what would slow us down in the next 6 months and what does it cost.

## Forward outlook 2026–2030

TA dashboards will move from monthly snapshots to live operational tools, with predictive metrics (forecast time-to-fill, forecast offer acceptance) replacing lagging metrics as the primary decision input.

**Built for what's next.**

tenperzent.com is the AI-native ATS designed for European hiring in 2026 - GDPR by default, EU AI Act compliant, free to start, €79/month to scale.

**Start free at [tenperzent.com](https://tenperzent.com)**