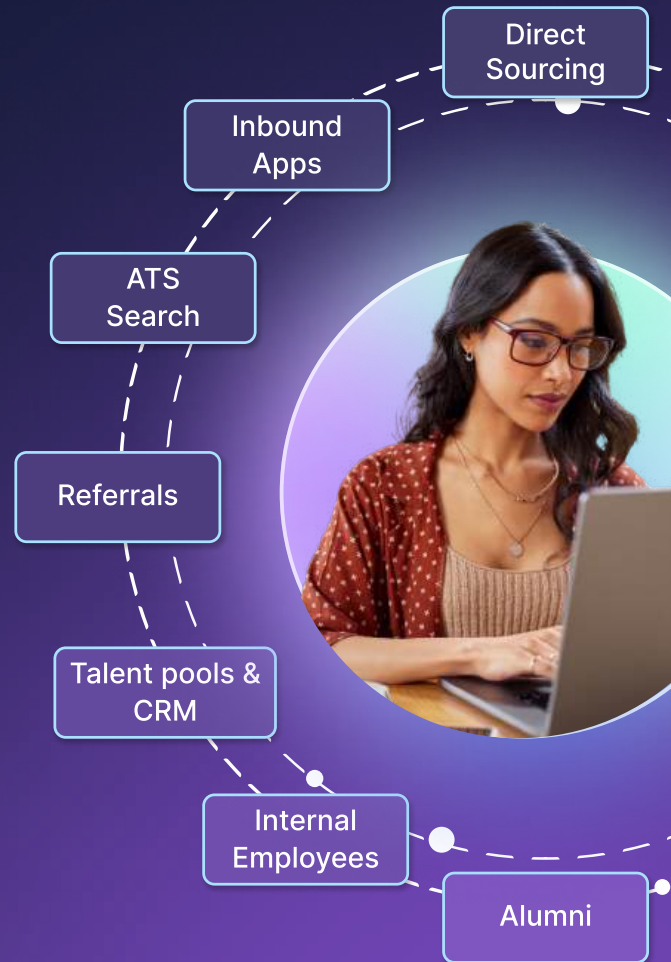




2025 State of Sourcing Channel Performance

Sourcing data and insights from real customers using Findem's Talent Data Cloud



Why warm channels, why now?

Recruiting is at a crossroads. The pressure on talent leaders to move fast, show impact, and hire better has never been higher. But for many teams, the reality is frustratingly familiar — waiting. Waiting on responses. Waiting for the right candidates to apply. Waiting on systems that don't provide real insights.

The challenge? Most hiring teams are stuck in a reactive loop. They post a job, hope the right applicants find it, and when that doesn't work, they turn to external sourcing — chasing cold leads instead of activating the warm talent already within reach.

For years, I suspected that past applicants, referrals, alumni, and internal talent were untapped goldmines. But like most TA leaders, I didn't have an easy, cost effective way to identify warm channel talent. The most effective recruiting teams are finding ways to move from reactive to proactive, identifying the talent they already know to build stronger pipelines faster.

That's exactly why we're publishing the 2025 State of Sourcing Channel Performance. This report is based on real customer data from Findem's Talent Data Cloud, analyzing how high-performing teams are rethinking sourcing strategy, unlocking hidden value in their ATS, and making the shift from hiring on hope to hiring with confidence.



Brett Coin
Chief Transformation Officer, Findem

Brett Coin is the Chief Transformation Officer at Findem, where he helps companies reimagine talent strategies in an AI-first era. A veteran talent leader, Brett has built and scaled high-performing teams with a business-first approach to recruiting. Before joining Findem, he was SVP of Talent at Okta, where he led the company through rapid growth. Having previously served as an advisor to Findem, Brett now leads its Talent Transformation initiative, working with organizations to optimize their talent ecosystems, tech stacks, and team structures.

Key Definitions and Notes

Definitions of key terms used throughout the report:

Findem's Talent Data Cloud: A cutting-edge platform that combines comprehensive talent data, AI automation, and powerful analytics to transform hiring and workforce management. It processes billions of data points to deliver precise talent matching, streamlined recruiting workflows, and actionable insights — all in one platform.

Multichannel Sourcing: A comprehensive approach to finding talent across multiple channels, including inbound applicants, referrals, alumni, and external sources. Each channel indicates candidate interest levels and brand awareness, helping prioritize outreach based on match quality.

Candidate Rediscovery: The strategy of searching for talent from the pool of past applicants within an ATS (Applicant Tracking System). Instead of relying solely on new applications, rediscovery enables recruiters to engage known, interested candidates.

3D Data: A combination of people and company data tracked over time. This continuously enhanced dataset is far larger and more accurate than traditional candidate data sources, making it a powerful tool for generating deep insights and powering automated workflows in talent acquisition and management.

Reply Rate: The percentage of candidates who respond to outreach, indicating their engagement with a recruiter's message.

Interest Rate: The percentage of candidates who express a willingness to move forward in the hiring process after initial outreach.

Contact-to-Interest Rate: The ratio of candidates contacted to those who express interest, measuring the effectiveness of outreach strategies.

Time to Reply: The average time it takes for a candidate to respond after initial outreach, providing insight into how quickly recruiters can build pipeline momentum.

Executive Summary

Recruiting teams today face mounting pressure to deliver impact faster, with fewer resources. Yet, 85% of sourcing efforts are still focused on cold outreach — contacting candidates with no prior connection to the company. This reactive approach is inefficient, time-consuming, and results in lower response rates.

Findem analyzed outreach performance to 300,000 candidates last year to determine how different sourcing strategies impact efficiency, engagement, and hiring outcomes. The results confirm that a multichannel approach consistently outperforms reliance on cold sourcing alone.

By shifting focus from cold outreach to rediscovery and warm sourcing, talent teams can improve engagement, cut sourcing time, and build stronger, more effective pipelines.

Data Overview

- 35 Industries
- 800+ Users
- 6,200 Projects (Searches)
- 3,800 Email Campaigns
- 300K+ Candidates Contacted
- 127 Countries
- Data from Jan-Dec 2024

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FINDING 1

Warm Channels Deliver Superior ROI

The first major finding from our research confirmed what many talent leaders have long suspected: warm sourcing channels, including the ATS, alumni, and referrals, drive significantly higher ROI than external sourcing.

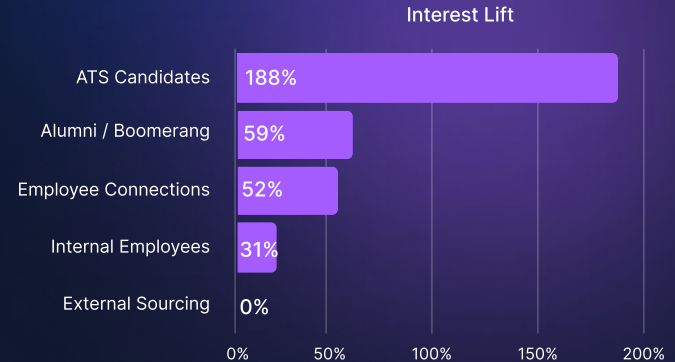
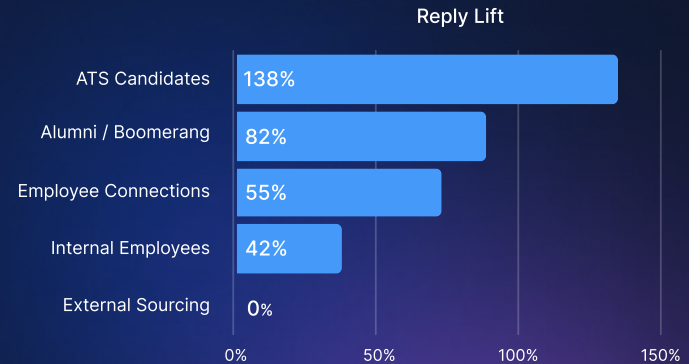
Candidates with prior engagement are more likely to respond:

Past applicants, referrals, and alumni already know the company, making them far more receptive to outreach than cold-sourced candidates.

Recruiters reduce wasted effort: Instead of spending time convincing candidates to apply, TA teams can engage talent that is already primed for interest in open roles.

Hiring cycles move faster: With higher reply and interest rates, warm candidates move through the pipeline more efficiently, leading to faster time-to-fill.

Warm sourcing isn't just more effective — it's more efficient. Instead of starting from scratch with cold leads, talent teams can tap into their existing network to fill roles faster, improve engagement, and drive better hiring outcomes.



FINDING 2

ATS Rediscovery = Highest Return

When we analyzed sourcing performance by channel, ATS rediscovery emerged as a significantly stronger performer than external sourcing, delivering higher engagement and faster hiring outcomes.

It's important to define what ATS rediscovery means when using Findem. Findem ATS rediscovery allows recruiters to search within their past applicants and find any matching candidates with updated, verified profiles. It's clear that candidates who applied before are far more likely to re-engage than cold-source candidates — especially when they've gained new skills or experience since their last interaction.

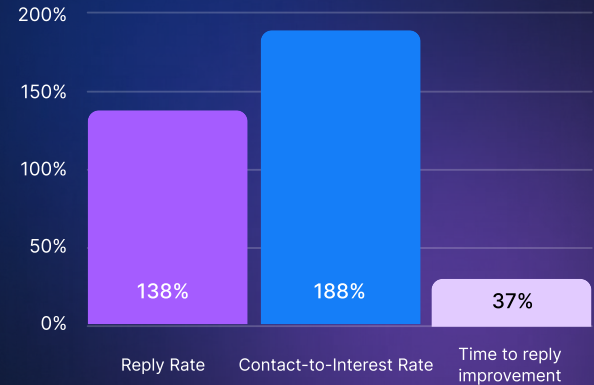
This tells us that TA teams who prioritize rediscovery can dramatically improve their hiring outcomes before they even look at external sourcing.

Candidates evolve over time: Recruiters can track how past applicants have grown since their last application, making it easier to match them to current roles.

Higher engagement, lower effort: These candidates have already shown interest in the company, meaning outreach is more effective and more likely to convert.

Faster response times: Rediscovered candidates reply sooner, reducing sourcing cycles and helping teams fill roles faster.

The takeaway: ATS rediscovery is one of the most underutilized, high-impact sourcing strategies available. Instead of spending time finding new cold prospects, TA teams can tap into their own database to source better candidates, faster.



FINDING 3

Warm Channels Work Across Companies and Industries

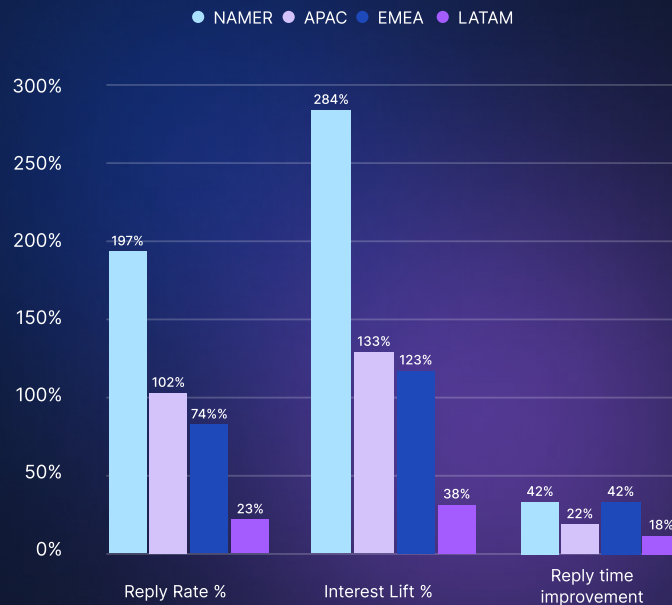
Another question we wanted to answer was whether ATS rediscovery's benefits were specific to certain markets or if they were universal. While North America (NAMER) saw the biggest performance gains, ATS rediscovery consistently improved reply and interest rates across all regions.

Warm outreach works everywhere: No matter the region, candidates with a prior connection to a company respond at higher rates and show more interest than those sourced externally.

Faster pipeline movement: ATS rediscovery shortens hiring cycles across markets, helping teams engage qualified candidates faster.

Scalable efficiency: For companies hiring across multiple geographies, rediscovery offers a repeatable, high-impact strategy that doesn't rely on market-specific tactics.

ATS rediscovery isn't just effective. It's a globally proven strategy for improving sourcing efficiency, regardless of region. Whether you're hiring in NAMER, EMEA, or APAC, activating past applicants leads to better results than cold sourcing.



FINDING 4

ATS Rediscovery Boosts Diversity Outcomes

One of the most exciting findings from our research is that rediscovery isn't just an efficiency booster. It also improves diversity outcomes.

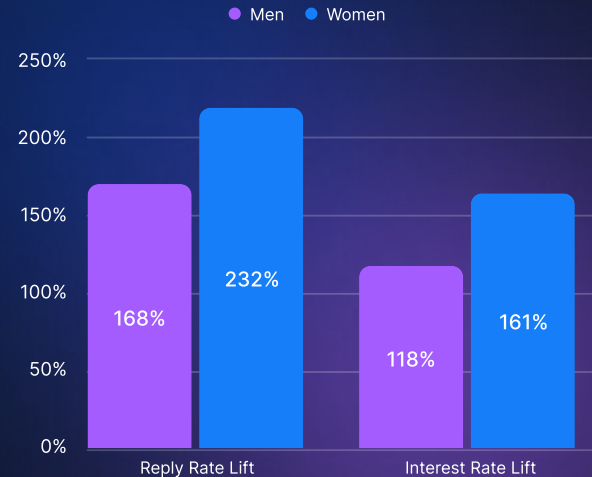
Companies often struggle to create sustainable, data-driven diversity hiring strategies. But our research found that ATS rediscovery can be a powerful tool for improving gender representation — a critical but often overlooked benefit.

Women are more likely to re-engage than men: Traditional cold outreach often struggles to reach and convert women candidates. ATS rediscovery helps companies connect with qualified, interested women who have already engaged with their brand.

An untapped DEI strategy: Many companies focus on top-of-funnel diversity initiatives, but rediscovery is an overlooked way to increase representation without expanding sourcing efforts.

Faster, more effective DEI hiring: Because women respond at significantly higher rates through rediscovery, recruiters can fill roles faster while improving gender balance in hiring pipelines.

Companies looking to improve gender representation in hiring should invest in ATS rediscovery as a core part of their DEI strategy. Instead of constantly searching for new diverse candidates, teams can engage women already in their database — faster and more effectively than cold sourcing.



FINDING 5

ATS Rediscovery Helps Underdog Companies Win Talent

Brand recognition is often a major challenge for smaller companies or those without a well-known employer brand. When competing against larger organizations with household names, deep resources, and strong brand equity, smaller companies can struggle to attract top talent — especially through cold outreach. But our data suggests that ATS rediscovery helps close this gap.

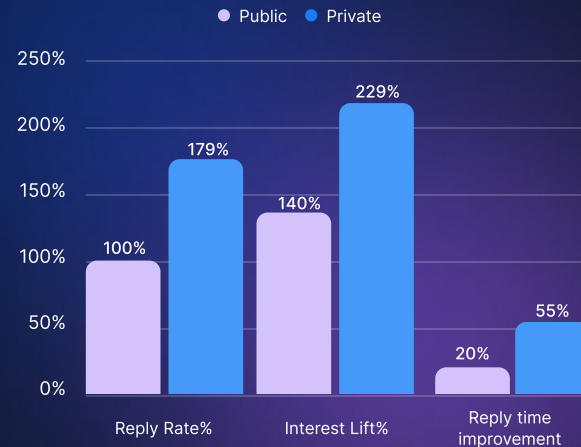
Rediscovery gives smaller companies a competitive edge:

Candidates who have already applied before are more likely to engage, even if the company isn't widely recognized.

Less reliance on expensive branding campaigns: Rather than trying to build employer brand awareness from scratch, companies can leverage their existing database to engage interested candidates more effectively.

A smarter way to source top talent: Instead of chasing passive candidates who may never consider them, companies can prioritize rediscovery to fill roles faster and with better fit.

Even without strong employer brand recognition, companies can compete effectively by focusing on rediscovered candidates. ATS rediscovery ensures that brand awareness isn't a hiring barrier — qualified talent is already in your database, ready to re-engage.



FINDING 6

ATS Rediscovery Works in Toughest Talent Markets

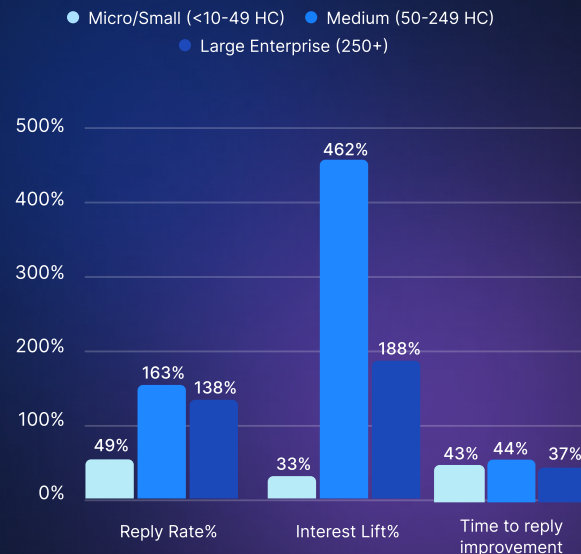
For many mid-sized companies (50-250 employees), competing for talent against large enterprises can feel like an uphill battle. Bigger companies often have stronger employer brands, larger recruiting teams, and bigger budgets to attract top candidates. But our research found that ATS rediscovery helps mid-sized businesses level the playing field.

Smaller recruiting teams, bigger impact: Mid-sized companies often don't have the luxury of large sourcing teams, so rediscovery allows them to maximize efficiency and reach engaged talent faster.

Employer brand isn't a hiring barrier: Candidates from rediscovery already know the company, meaning mid-sized businesses don't need to rely as heavily on employer branding efforts to attract talent.

A high-impact, low-cost sourcing strategy: Instead of investing in expensive outbound campaigns or external sourcing tools, mid-sized companies can drive better results simply by re-engaging past applicants.

ATS rediscovery helps mid-sized businesses compete with enterprise hiring power, delivering strong interest rates and engagement without requiring massive recruiting budgets or brand awareness.



FINDING 7

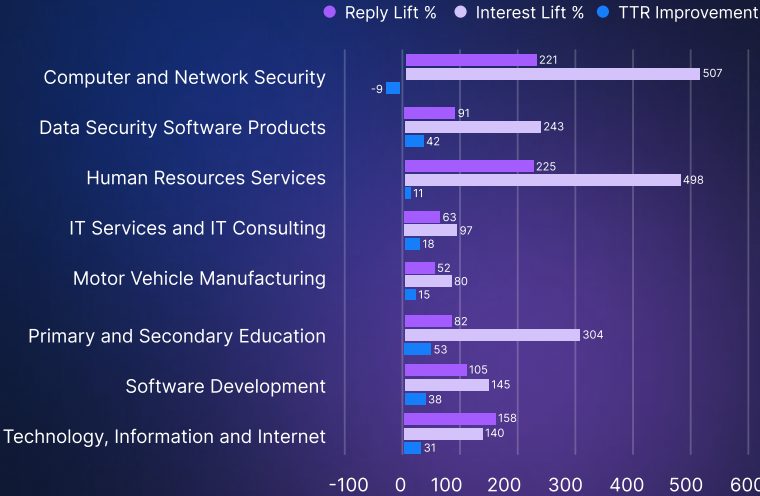
ATS Rediscovery Can Provide an Edge in the Most Competitive Industries

For industries where sourcing is traditionally difficult, ATS rediscovery can be a game-changer. Certain sectors struggle with talent shortages, slow hiring cycles, and low response rates, making outbound sourcing an uphill battle. But our research found that rediscovery provides a massive efficiency boost in these industries.

Sourcing is traditionally slow and difficult: Finding qualified candidates in education, finance, and technology can be challenging due to high demand, talent shortages, and complex hiring processes.

Warm candidates reduce friction: Re-engaging past applicants allows teams to fill roles faster instead of relying on unpredictable outbound sourcing.

The impact is measurable: Rediscovery dramatically shortens time-to-fill, helping companies and institutions meet critical hiring goals.



Key Findings

The traditional sourcing model is broken. Too many talent teams default to cold outreach, spending valuable time trying to engage candidates who have no prior connection to their company. But the data is clear: shifting focus to warm sourcing strategies — especially ATS rediscovery — delivers better hiring outcomes, faster.

Warm sourcing channels drive superior ROI

Candidates with prior engagement (past applicants, referrals, alumni, internal employees) are significantly more likely to respond and express interest than those contacted cold.

ATS rediscovery is the highest-performing sourcing strategy

Past applicants yield a 138% higher reply rate, 188% higher interest rate, and a 37% faster time-to-reply compared to external cold-sourced candidates.

Efficiency gains from ATS rediscovery hold true across all regions

While North America sees the strongest engagement lift, ATS rediscovery significantly improves response rates in EMEA and APAC as well.

Rediscovery drives stronger diversity hiring outcomes

Women see a 232% reply lift and a 161% interest lift when sourced through ATS rediscovery, making it a powerful strategy for improving demographic representation.

Rediscovery helps smaller companies and underdog brands compete

Private companies and mid-sized businesses (50-250 employees) see the highest lift in reply and interest rates, proving rediscovery closes the gap between small and large enterprises

ATS rediscovery is a game-changer for hard-to-fill roles

In highly competitive industries like Computer & Network Security, HR Services, Financial Services, and Primary/Secondary Education, rediscovery significantly reduces sourcing time and increases hiring efficiency.

How Findem can help

Recruiting teams can no longer afford to rely on outdated habits and cold sourcing alone. The data is clear: warm channels are faster, more efficient, and drive better business outcomes.

Findem's Talent Data Cloud makes warm channel activation easy. With AI-powered rediscovery, talent teams can automatically surface past applicants and the best-fit candidates already in their database. Multichannel sourcing automation enables recruiters to tap into alumni, referrals, and internal employees without manual effort, while real-time profile refresh ensures that every candidate's 3D profile is accurate, up-to-date, and complete before outreach.

Our team of value consultants partner with customers as more than technology providers — but as true change agents, guiding them through the adoption process. These industry experts deeply understand recruiting pain points, and are consultative partners along every step of the transformation journey.

By leveraging these capabilities, recruiting teams can accelerate application review with talent data they can trust. AI-driven sourcing eliminates wasted effort, helping talent acquisition teams operate more efficiently. With a proactive, data-driven hiring strategy, companies can shift away from reactive, inefficient sourcing methods and start building stronger, more engaged pipelines. Those who move beyond cold outreach and embrace a warm sourcing model will be the ones that win in the future of talent acquisition.

Findem helps talent teams rediscover, engage, and hire the best candidates faster. If you're ready to activate warm sourcing and see the impact for yourself, [request a demo today](#).

