

What is More Important in Recruitment? Technology or Human Judgement?



Artificial intelligence is no longer just a concept for recruitment; it is now part of the infrastructure on how organizations identify, assess, manage, and communicate with talent.

The global AI in talent acquisition market was valued at approximately \$1.35 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach \$1.6 billion in 2026, representing growth of approximately 18.8%. By 2030, the market is expected to reach approximately \$3.16 billion.

Much of this growth is being driven by organizations to automate time-consuming elements of recruitment, including candidate resourcing, resume screening, interview scheduling, communication, data analysis, and administrative processes—which, sure, are time-saving but cannot replace people.

But it begs an important question: **How much of recruitment should actually be non-human?**

The hospitality industry is a “people business,” especially at the executive level in particular. Hiring decisions cannot simply be reduced to keywords, employment histories, or algorithmic compatibility scores.

A resume may tell us that a GM has operated a 400-room luxury hotel. It *cannot* necessarily tell us how that individual commands a room, responds to an ownership

disagreement, develops department heads, handles an unexpected operational crisis or builds a culture that retains employees... It also does not tell us if they did all of this themselves or if their boss oversaw these accomplishments?

It definitely cannot tell us whether the person who looks perfect on paper will actually fit the organization or whether their resume is “fudged” a bit or a lot.

At Renard International, after more than 56 years in hospitality executive search, we believe the greatest opportunity for AI is not necessarily replacing your hiring judgement but **supporting the effort surrounding that judgement**. According to LinkedIn, up to 50% of all resumes on its platforms are out of date or “incorrect” intentionally or unintentionally.

AI-assisted research tools can process large quantities of publicly available professional information and help recruiters identify potential talent pools, career movements, and comparable organizations more efficiently.

This can significantly accelerate the research stage of a search; however, identifying someone who appears qualified is very different from determining whether that person is genuinely appropriate for an opportunity. Executive search still requires understanding motivation, personality, leadership style, family considerations, compensation expectations, career ambitions and cultural compatibility—factors that are *rarely* ever captured adequately by words in a resume.

Hospitality executives frequently remain within Renard’s professional networks for decades. A candidate who is not appropriate for one assignment may become an ideal candidate for another several years later! Technology can help recruitment firms maintain these relationships at greater scale by organizing communications and identifying when executives change positions or companies. Rather than replacing industry knowledge, these systems can make that knowledge easier to organize and interpret.

Hospitality leadership is constantly changing. General Managers become Regional Vice Presidents. Executive Chefs move internationally. Director of Food & Beverage become Hotel Managers. New properties open and management companies expand into new markets...

New leadership roles and new markets require cultural savvy that a resume alone cannot reveal.

One of AI’s most interesting applications may be its ability to analyze large datasets. For compensation research, like Renard International’s annual Salary Surveys, technology can identify year-over-year movements, regional differences, unusual responses, emerging compensation patterns, and correlations that may otherwise require considerable manual analysis.

For an organization such as Renard International, which has conducted hospitality compensation research for decades, AI can therefore become another analytical instrument. The quality of insight, however, remains dependent upon the quality of the underlying information. AI cannot compensate for incomplete, false, or poorly collected data.

Interview scheduling, meeting summaries, document preparation, database organization, invoicing, contract administration, and routine reporting can consume significant portions of a hotel's talent directories working day.

Automating appropriate portion of this work allows professionals to spend more time speaking with candidates, advising clients, and evaluating talent—areas where their experience creates considerably more value.

Resume-screening systems are capable of reviewing enormous numbers of applications quickly, but executive recruitment is not simply an exercise in finding the highest number of matching keywords. After all, everyone knows which words to add to a resume to help it float to the top of the pile.

We all know that hospitality careers are rarely perfectly linear. You don't choose candidates like reading the contents of a soup can.

An unconventional career move may have given an executive exactly the experience a particular property needs. A candidate from outside the obvious competitive set may bring a different leadership philosophy. Another candidate may meet every technical requirement yet lack the interpersonal skills required to succeed within a particular ownership or corporate environment. Sure, engineers require more technical skills and less interpersonal skills, but both need to be carefully vetted!

These are also broader concerns surrounding data privacy and algorithmic bias. AI systems learn from existing information and historical patterns. If those patterns contain biases, technology can reproduce—or even amplify—them unless organizations actively monitor how these systems are being used. For us, this means AI governance will increasingly become part or responsible recruitment.

Organizations *should* and *must* understand what information their systems collect, how candidate data is handled, what decisions are being automated and, importantly, **where a human being remains accountable for the final decision.**

The most productive discussion surrounding AI may therefore be less about whether companies should use it and more about **where they should use it.**

Technology is exceptionally good at processing volume: it can organize thousands of records, identify patterns across datasets, automate repetitive communication, and

summarize information in seconds; but, human beings remain considerably better at understanding nuance.

Leadership presence. Ambition. Integrity. Emotional intelligence. Cultural compatibility. Personal circumstances. Reputation. Chemistry. The difference between someone who can perform a position and someone who can transform it...

These are particularly more important distinctions in hospitality because executives do not simply manage assets. They manage people who create experiences for other people.

The future of talent management is therefore unlikely to be entirely human or entirely artificial. The stronger model may be one in which technology handles more of the repetitive work, giving true talent specialists more time to perform the work **at the heart of talent recruitment**: meeting and speaking with people in person or online, understanding organizations, exercising judgement, and building relationships...

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