

Optimism For AI In Hiring Is High, But Don't Forget Transparency

HR Executive | Tom Starner | July 18, 2024

When it comes to AI in hiring, respondents on both sides of the hiring equation reported in a recent survey that they are fairly confident in the fairness baked into today's AI tools. But, experts say, to take advantage of AI's potential for fair hiring, HR leaders need to ensure they are clear and transparent about AI's role in hiring decision-making.

The survey, from hiring tech provider HireVue, asked 3,100 workers and 1,000 HR professionals in the U.S. and the U.K. to share their perspectives on the current and future landscapes for AI in hiring.

According to Lindsey Zuloaga, HireVue's chief data scientist, the research demonstrated changing perceptions about the fairness of AI tools, with 64% of job candidates saying those tools are the same or better than humans at treating applicants fairly. Also, 67% of HR professionals said AI is the same or better than humans at finding well-qualified applicants.

Despite this potential, Zuloaga notes that ensuring candidates are comfortable with AI in hiring is critical for employers that want to protect employer perceptions—while also seeing efficiency and fairness benefits.

"It's always been important for candidates to understand how they're being evaluated in the hiring process, but the widespread use of AI-backed tools makes it even more critical that employers are transparent about how decisions are made," Zuloaga says.

Candidates are craving clarity about AI in hiring

According to Zuloaga, "leaders who err on the side of clear explainability about how AI is used will reap the benefits of these new technologies, without sacrificing applicant satisfaction or causing undue concern about fairness."

In particular, HireVue's data shows that, while workers are positive about employers using AI to remove the tedious, manual tasks in hiring, they remain concerned about AI being used without their knowledge.

For example, 79% of workers told HireVue that they want to know if AI is being used when they apply for a job—mainly because they are concerned that AI is not quite as effective as humans in hard-to-determine factors such as seeing potential or identifying culture fit.

"AI tools are being developed—or already exist—for nearly every specialty and task within HR's purview," she says. "Teams should prioritize selecting platforms that are built upon a well-established, documented foundation of AI ethics, cutting-edge research and rigorous engagement with regulators."

An “established record of legal compliance,” Zuloaga says, should be the “deciding factor” for employers looking to “unlock the benefits of new hiring technologies.”

“And employers need to act fast with guidelines around their use,” she adds.

Embracing the potential of AI in hiring

As for HR, 70% say they are currently using or plan to use AI in hiring within the next year; 41% of those already doing so say they are more productive.

The survey found that the main reasons for HR’s optimism about AI in hiring include the productivity benefits from using AI in candidate communications, resume screening and assessments. At the same time, workers are using AI themselves—to update resumes, write cover letters and prepare for an interview.

Zuloaga says hiring is a “high-stakes” domain, and talent teams should prioritize partnering with companies that can validate claims with audits and documentation of fairness.

“Remember, these tools can be remarkable, but they are not magic,” she says. “Be wary of anyone overpromising results without the ability to back up claims.”