How to Transition to SmartRecruiters

*A practical guide for Recruitment leaders **currently running on SuccessFactors Recruiting.***

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RECRUITMENT TECH MASTERS BV
Business consultancy for Recruitment Technology & innovations
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About Recruitment Tech Masters

1. Executive summary: SmartRecruiters to replace SuccessFactors Recruiting

SAP is retiring SuccessFactors Recruiting in favour of SmartRecruiters, following the acquisition of this best-of-breed ATS in September 2025. If you are running recruitment on SuccessFactors today, you're either worried about the hassle, or just as excited as we are! We all know SmartRecruiters will be a big step up in terms of recruitment functionality, candidate and recruitment experience, and therefore business impact.

However, transitioning to SmartRecruiters is more easily said than done. It's not just an IT (replacement) project: you will need to redesign your recruitment processes, upgrade integrations with other systems, and work cross-functionally with HRIS and HRIT to get this transformation done.

While SuccessFactors Recruiting won't be shut down immediately, SAP has already stopped development on SF Recruiting (shifting roughly 100 developers to SmartRecruiters feature development and roughly 40 to integrations), and SF Recruiting is no longer part of their product offering.

This means that, as of now, contract renewals will *only offer SmartRecruiters* licences (and Winston AI features) for recruitment. And if you don't want to wait until the end of your current SF contract, SAP is generally willing to open your contract early to start your transition to SmartRecruiters.

Either way, further investment in SuccessFactors Recruiting is hard to justify at this point. Unless you are looking to move away from SAP altogether, for most SF Recruiting customers it's less a question of IF you move to SmartRecruiters, and more WHEN.

This Whitepaper is for you, if…

This guide is written specifically for Recruitment leaders (e.g. TA managers or Recruitment architects) currently running on SuccessFactors Recruiting (but just as well useful if you're on another ATS and interested in Smartrecruiters).

It covers why this is happening, the benefits of SmartRecruiters, how it fits into your future recruitment landscape, and what to do now to prepare for this imminent transition (both in terms of priority and planning, and functionally), to make sure you get the benefits you need.

2. What happened and what's the impact of SAP acquiring SmartRecruiters?

SAP acquired SmartRecruiters in September 2025 and has since moved quickly to incorporate it into the SuccessFactors offering. Contrary to most tooling acquisitions, SAP is not trying to merge SmartRecruiters' functionality into its existing suite, an approach that usually waters strong features down into an outdated HR architecture. What is genuinely exciting to recruitment tech experts is that SAP has acknowledged SuccessFactors Recruiting was inferior to SmartRecruiters, and is already moving all focus, development, integrations and their customers into SmartRecruiters as fast as possible. For the first time, we see a true best-of-breed ATS inside an HR suite.

As of the 1H 2026 SuccessFactors release, the two platforms already share single sign-on, connected core data (job families, cost centres, locations) and aligned navigation. SAP has been explicit that this is a consolidation, not a side-by-side experiment: SmartRecruiters is positioned to become the recruiting layer within the SuccessFactors

product line to manage Jobs and Candidates, while SuccessFactors Employee Central remains the system of record for organisational data and employees.

SAP's own reasoning centres around three things SmartRecruiters does better than the native SuccessFactors Recruiting module: a faster, more intuitive user experience for recruiters and hiring managers; embedded AI across sourcing, matching, screening and scheduling (SmartRecruiters' “Winston” assistant, working alongside SAP's Joule AI from 2026 onward); and a deployment model built specifically for talent acquisition rather than configured out of a broader HCM suite.

For customers, the practical implication is a migration runway with a hard edge at the end of your current contract: all SuccessFactors customers will move to SmartRecruiters within the next three to five years, with development on SF Recruiting reduced to a bare minimum.

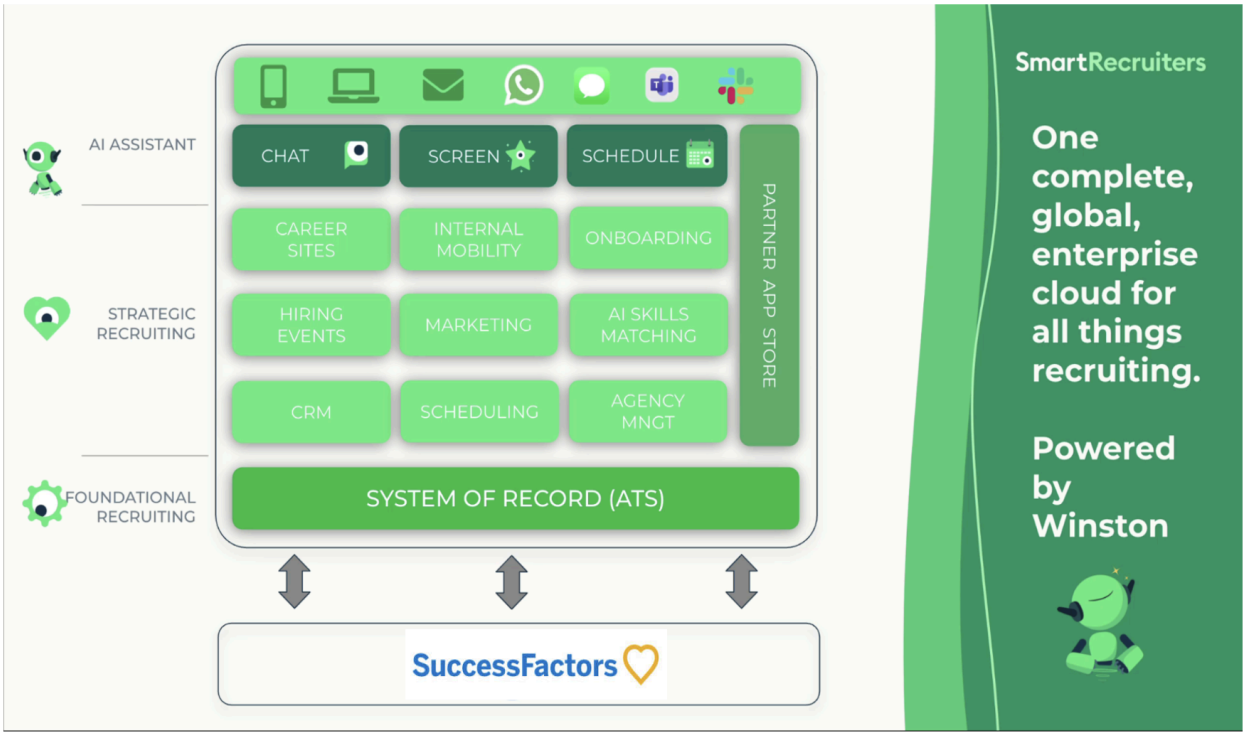
That is still a good position to be in, because it means the transition can be planned (and even accelerated) on your terms. But only if you start planning now, and only if someone on the TA side actually owns making it happen.

3. Why SmartRecruiters is a real step forward

SuccessFactors Recruiting and SmartRecruiters are not close cousins with different skins (they were built for different processes, from completely different backgrounds, intentions and structure).

SuccessFactors Recruiting used to be a module built on a broader HR administration suite, designed around the steady-state, largely complete data of current employees. SmartRecruiters was designed and built (originally to compete directly with LinkedIn's recruiting products) from the start with a different architecture and need in mind: high volumes of messy, incomplete candidate data arriving from dozens of sources, at speed, where candidate experience determines how your best applicants run through a cooperative process.

SmartRecruiters offers a much wider range of recruitment-specific functionality and modules, built on top of a foundational system of record for Jobs and Candidates referred to as the SmartOS (previously called “the ATS”):



SmartRecruiters' functional layers sitting on top of SAP SuccessFactors, powered by the Winston AI assistant. Source: SmartRecruiters.

- **Foundational recruiting.** SmartOS, a modern applicant tracking system as the system of record for jobs, candidates and pipelines, registering every interaction and piece of collaboration around them.
- **Strategic recruiting.** The SmartOS platform offers a wide range of processes and modules tailored to specific parts of recruitment (candidate engagement, matching and interviewing): career sites, internal mobility, onboarding handoff, hiring events, recruitment marketing, AI-driven skills matching, a built-in CRM for talent pooling, interview scheduling, and agency management. Functionality SuccessFactors Recruiting barely scratched the surface of.
- **AI Assistant (Winston).** Winston is SmartRecruiters' name for a set of recruitment-specific AI functionality, both internal (a companion that matches and assists recruiters) and candidate-facing (conversational AI). Chat, screening and scheduling run across every channel candidates and hiring managers actually use (mobile, web, email, WhatsApp, SMS, Teams and Slack). Fully integrated, not a bolt-on chatbot.

Almost none of this is native to SuccessFactors Recruiting today. CRM and talent pooling, an agency portal, true omni-channel AI screening and scheduling: until now, these have typically been separate 3rd party tools bolted on SuccessFactors, if they exist in your landscape at all. That is the gap SmartRecruiters envisions closing in one platform.

SmartRecruiters makes several other tools obsolete: simplify your landscape

Several TA tech providers have long prospered by bridging the gap left by SuccessFactors Recruiting, especially in recruitment CRM and talent pooling, and more recently in recruitment AI and automation.

SmartRecruiters delivers most (if not all) of this functionality fully integrated, most likely making several other tools in your recruitment landscape obsolete. This is the moment to rethink your to-be recruitment architecture, and evaluate it against the native and marketplace functionality SmartRecruiters offers. You get to save on other tools: in licences, integration and maintenance, while Simplifying your supplier landscape.

SmartRecruiters is built on solid integrations

SmartRecruiters fundamentally understands it has a specific position in the recruitment and HR landscape. While its native functionality is extensive, recruitment still needs to integrate with other business systems and tools. SmartRecruiters typically categorises these integrations as follows:

- **Core Data integrations.** Synchronising with the HRIS (SuccessFactors Employee Central) on organisational data (org charts, locations, cost centres), positions (job family, contract type, etc.) and employees (roles and contact information).
- **Work Tech integrations.** Bringing the recruitment process into Teams, Slack, Outlook, WhatsApp and similar tools, for real cooperation and seamless communication between recruiters, hiring managers and candidates.
- **Recruitment integrations.** Solid integrations with career sites, job boards, multiposters and recruitment dashboards, to support the outbound flow of jobs and the inbound flow of candidates.
- **Marketplace partners.** SmartRecruiters offers a large marketplace of integrations with partners for specific point solutions (assessment tools, background checks, job board integrations and more).

Onboarding is next

SAP has also moved governance of Onboarding 2.0 (a SuccessFactors product) under Rebecca Carr, SmartRecruiters' CEO: a signal that the post-offer, pre-day-one handoff is being redesigned around candidate experience rather than treated as the administrative afterthought it is today. Bringing development of these

products closer together is the next step toward a better candidate experience and a seamless handover between TA and onboarding into HR.

Note: for organisations not on SAP, SmartRecruiters still offers its own native Onboarding module, integrating directly with other core HRIS platforms such as Workday or Oracle.

The business case for moving to SmartRecruiters

We've all heard the promises of better tech. After well over 15 years of implementing recruitment tech, we can safely say moving to SmartRecruiters is indeed a big leap forward. Depending on where your biggest pain points lie, we typically see the following benefits:

- **Reduced recruitment admin time.** We typically see a 30–40% reduction in recruitment administration time for recruiters, hiring managers and HR officers (on job creation, candidate rejections, interview planning, registration and offer creation), leaving more time to actually spend on interviewing.
- **Lower recruitment marketing spend.** CRM and talent pooling reduce paid sourcing and advertising spend (supported by white-label Vonq multiposting and media handling), and a white-label agency portal (Hireport) further reduces media and agency spend.
- **Reduced maintenance, support and improvement (HRIS) cost.** Configuring SmartRecruiters is simpler, quicker and more self-service than the often tedious process of submitting a change request on SuccessFactors.
- **Save on add-on tools and integrations.** The native modules (CRM, interview scheduling, conversational AI) and standard integrations of the all-in-one SmartRecruiters platform save you on 3rd party licence fees, integration costs and the support burden of add-on recruitment tools and extra vendors.
- **Extra business revenue from filling roles faster.** Faster time-to-present and time-to-hire translate directly into filled roles and revenue-generating capacity, whether you're in high-volume or seasonal hiring, or hiring for headquarters roles. Fill open roles faster, or make sure you have enough staff to open a new store. Your business is gonna love this.
- **Business lost to poor candidate experience.** A poor candidate experience does not just cost you a hire (for consumer-facing employers, frustrated applicants are also customers you can lose). Would you still shop with a company that mishandled your application? Believe it or not, SmartRecruiters even helps you happily decline candidates that weren't a match.

> **What's your business case?**
>
> Need help quantifying your business case for HRIT or your CHRO, to make decision making possible? RTM is happy to help draft your roadmap, architecture and business case. Get in touch if you need help.

4. How SmartRecruiters is packaged and contracted

How you buy SmartRecruiters typically depends on your company's size.

Mid-size organisations can purchase individual modules separately, pick CRM, multiposting or agency management only if and when you need them.

For large and enterprise contracts, SmartRecruiters is often folded into the overall (five-year) SuccessFactors product line, and packaged into just two products: SmartOS, which bundles every module and is licensed per FTE, and Winston AI, licensed separately on usage.

This matters for your business case, not just your procurement process. Before you scope what a transition to SmartRecruiters would cost, inventory what you currently pay for additional recruitment technology (a standalone CRM tool, a multiposting subscription, a conversational-AI or chatbot vendor). If SmartOS already includes that functionality, this is not purely new spend; it is partly consolidation. That reframing changes the conversation with both finance and HRIT.

Implementation provided separately

Most ATS providers used to bundle licences/modules and implementation into a single offer.

These two are now split: you acquire the SmartRecruiters licences from SAP, and contract your own implementation/configuration partner separately.

See Chapter 8 for tips on how to select your implementation partner.

5. What you can do now!

We're probably preaching to the choir. We know you can't wait to move from SuccessFactors Recruiting to SmartRecruiters either! But as mentioned, this shouldn't be treated as an IT project. As a Recruitment leader, you are responsible for giving your recruitment business (central or local) the functionality it needs, at the right pace and priority.

- **1. Find out when your SuccessFactors contract actually ends.** Check with procurement or your HRIT contact. SuccessFactors Recruiting is usually part of a larger, multi-year SuccessFactors contract, and it cannot simply be renewed: by default, the next renewal replaces it with SmartRecruiters licences. Take into account your own Business (re)design, and finding the right Implementation partner as well. Most clients need at least 12 months from a project start to go-live, more for multi-country scope, so start preparing well before your renewal date, especially if you have other HR or recruitment projects running.
- **2. Review your current and future recruitment technology landscape and projects.** If you're currently rolling out, or investigating, a recruitment CRM, a job-multiposting tool, or conversational AI for candidates, check it against SmartRecruiters' native scope before committing further effort or investment. Some or all of it is likely already covered by SmartRecruiters, or better integrated with it than built temporarily on SF (see Section 4).
- **3. Review your recruitment processes and requirements.** Start with a baseline (global) process for your most common job type, then work out deviations for other job types or regions: differences in job fields, apply-form questions, interview stages (an extra assessment, an expert interview), the actors or systems involved, and the handover to onboarding or contracting. Set your own future requirements first, don't let HRIS or HRIT define them for you, or limit you to their technology view.

A quick self-check for Recruitment leaders currently running on SuccessFactors Recruiting

☐ Contract renewal: who owns the SuccessFactors contract, and when is it up for renewal?

☐ Recruitment process & organisation: what does your recruitment future look like? How do you envision your recruitment business evolving, and what requirements follow from that?

☐ Recruitment landscape & projects: what tooling projects and improvements are running or planned? Especially separate CRM, Apply-experience improvements or any (conversational) AI tools could easily be covered by the SmartRecruiters platform. And do you still want to invest in integrations with Successfactors?

☐ HRIS support: do you currently have a functional manager, and what is the current process and priority for recruitment-specific improvements? Note: config of Smartrecruiters can usually be done in 50% of the time.

- ☐ HRIT Priority and Roadmap: do you know whether Recruitment improvements are on the HR IT roadmap, and when? Who do you need to influence to get a decision and move priority?
- ☐ Ownership: is there a named Product Owner or Recruitment Ops in your team, to drive this improvements and to own your landscape from business side (backlog, releases, adoption, continuous improvement)?
- ☐ Business case: can you deliver a business case to your CHRO or board on recruitment improvements? Do you have budget to invest in a transition project (including budget for expert consultancy)?

6. How the transition actually works

Moving from SuccessFactors Recruiting to SmartRecruiters is not a tool replacement, it is a business improvement, and it needs to be treated like one. The good news: recruiting as a function, and the people working in it, adopt well-designed functionality easily. The discipline required is in rethinking processes rather than replicating old ones.

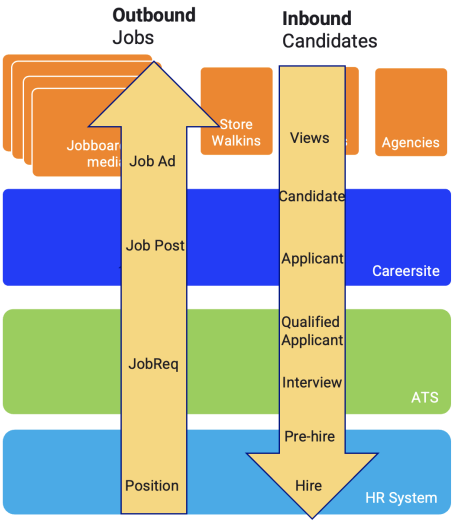
That said: while SAP has smoothed out a lot of the 'hard' technical integrations, a project like this still touches multiple systems and requires real technical insight, especially into how fields are used and defined across systems. You need someone who understands both the recruitment business and its people, and who can translate that into system configuration and change.

It's not just about tooling: think in terms of recruitment flows

Projects like this can't be run in isolation. Change your career site, and you affect the flows to and from job boards, as well as the flow to and from your ATS. Implement a new ATS, and you change nearly every flow in the recruitment pipeline.

We typically think about recruitment in two major flows:

- **Outbound (jobs).** SuccessFactors Employee Central → SmartRecruiters → your career site → job boards and media.
- **Inbound (candidates).** All sourcing channels (job boards, referrals, agencies, …) → your career site → SmartRecruiters → SuccessFactors Employee Central (HRIS) on hire.



RTM's outbound (jobs) and inbound (candidates) flow model.

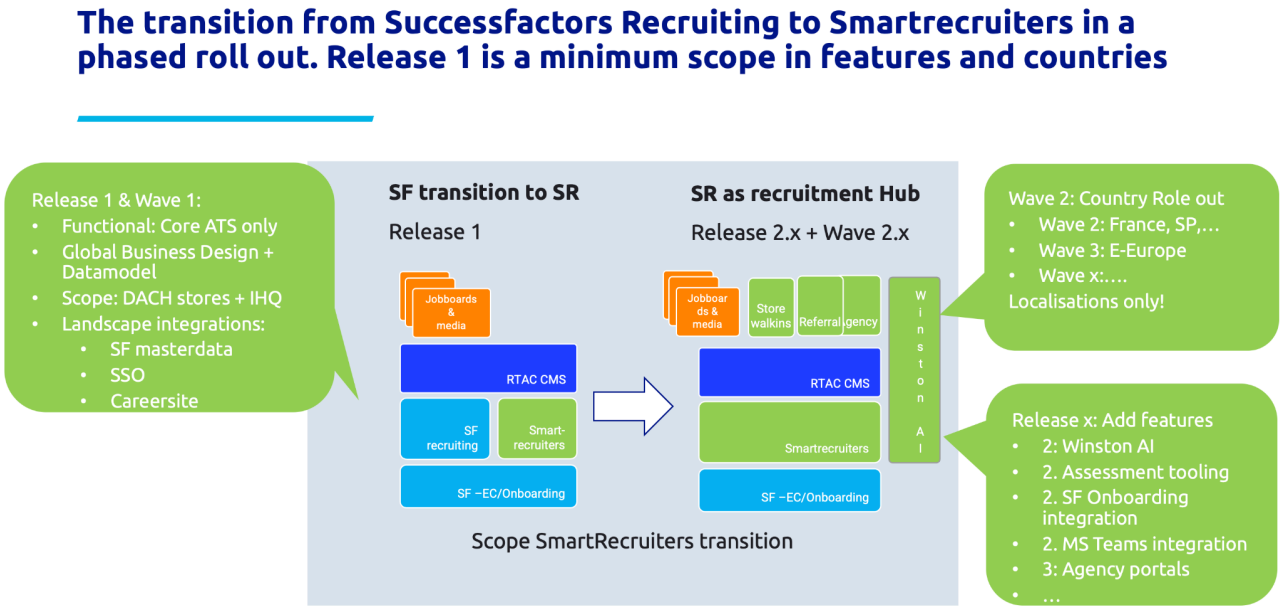
Both flows need to keep working throughout the transition, which means recruitment marketing (every job board and media integration) and candidate communications are directly affected, not just the ATS screens recruiters look at. Your upper-funnel candidate sources especially (job boards, store walk-ins, referrals, agency inflow, sourcing) should not be forgotten.

HRIT typically only focuses on lower-funnel changes, you need to bring upper-funnel expertise

HRIT usually understands that your ATS needs to integrate with your career site, but often doesn't grasp the full complexity of candidate inflow from every source. You need to map the outbound flow of jobs as well as understand how candidates flow back into your systems; upper-funnel candidate inflow is a whole new complexity.

Fade-in, fade-out (not big bang)

Most successful transitions we've run are not single-date big-bang cutovers. SmartRecruiters is most likely introduced in a phased approach, with SuccessFactors Recruiting fading out only once each wave is stable. This is lower-risk than a big-bang switch, and in practice the constraint is rarely the platform (it is organisational readiness and change capacity).



RTM's phased transition model: Release 1 covers core ATS functionality for a limited scope, with later releases and waves expanding features and countries.

We typically advise Release 1 and Wave 1 to coincide to cover a relatively small product and country/label scope, while still covering most of the complexities (meaning a limited functional scope, with just the most important integrations, for a limited number of labels, countries or languages). This lets you deliver a solid, global design and data model to a representative part of your organisation. Once this is stable you continue with future Releases delivering new functionality, while the rollout to further jobtypes, countries or labels is packaged into Waves.

The go-live of Release 1 should deliver a strong core product, with at least two WOW factors!

Projects are often planned to deliver an initial MVP (a minimum viable product). Don't. Delivering an MVP, or a 'Pilot' feels like an excuse to just deliver half a product, and leaves a bad First Impression. . Go for a Core product that brings real improvements you can be proud of!

We advise delivering a strong Core product, with at least two 'wow factors' (genuinely solving practical problems, which may vary per organisation or even department), to a manageable group of the organisation. Celebrate it!

What about data migration?

A phased rollout doesn't remove the need for a clear data migration strategy: what do you actually take along from SuccessFactors Recruiting, and what do you leave behind? In the roughly 100 corporate ATS projects we've supported, only a handful included an actual candidate data migration. In practice, field mapping and data quality are rarely good enough to make it worthwhile. Treat migration as the exception, not the default, and focus your effort here instead:

- **Masterdata and HRIS sync.** Put most of your migration effort into cleaning up and (re)defining masterdata (organisational fields, job families, etc.) and the data model behind the sync between your HRIS and ATS (SF Employee Central and SmartRecruiters).
- **Jobs.** Pull a text extract from SF Recruiting and manually recreate your jobs and templates in SmartRecruiters. It doubles as proper training for your recruiters, a good practice run, and a natural moment to re-establish ownership of your job data.
- **Candidates.** Only migrate talent pools or silver medallists that have contacted in the last six months, and only if your Privacy policy and candidate consent registration actually allow it, so liaise with your DPO. Candidates still in an active interview: finish the process in SF Recruiting during fade-out, or recreate them manually in SmartRecruiters during fade-in. For everything else, export just the contact details (name, email) and run a campaign inviting candidates to register and refresh their own profile in the new system.

Either way, don't carry your data pollution forward. Years of workarounds, duplicate records and inconsistent job data build up in any ATS, use the migration as your cleanup moment, not a reason to postpone it.

Change and adoption: not just configuration

A well-configured SmartRecruiters environment doesn't guarantee adoption. Recruiters usually pick up new tooling quickly, since it's core to their day-to-day work. Hiring managers and decentralised or local users are a different story: they touch the ATS far less often, and are quicker to fall back on email or old habits.

- **Hiring managers.** Keep their part of the process as simple as possible, and invest specifically in their onboarding (via recruiters) and self-explanatory communication in emails when triggered in the process. They won't read a full manual for a tool they use a few times a month, no need to 'train' them on an ATS.
- **Decentralised and local users.** Label- or country-specific teams need *local champions* and local-language support materials, not just a global rollout announcement.

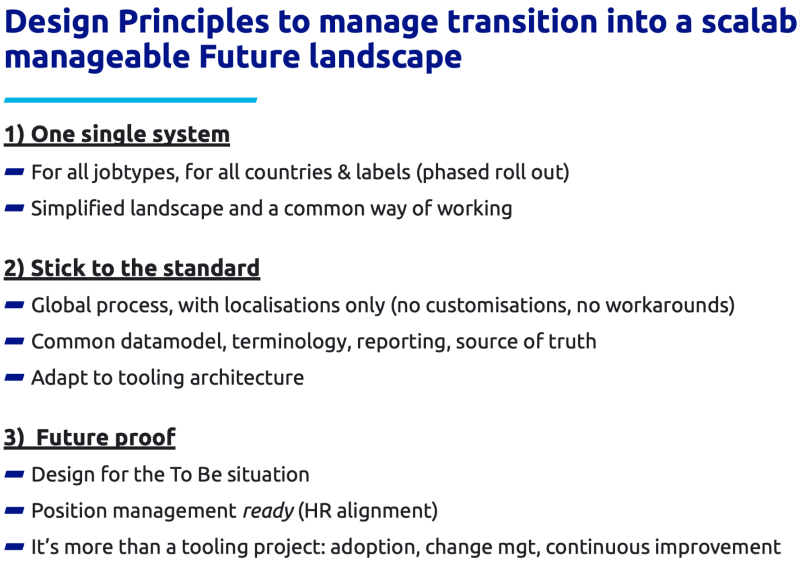
Budget time and people for this: change and adoption, not just configuration and integrations.

Design principles to govern your transition

We've long said a system should adjust to your processes, but in recruitment, we've also managed to over-complicate things by trying to please everyone and every case. Most projects, and most businesses, fail in the long run by accommodating too many configurations and customisations: custom fields added to cover every

exception, workarounds rebuilt for edge cases, users asking for add-ons that require complex custom integrations rather than using native functionality or standard partners.

If you want a robust, scalable landscape that's manageable and can adapt to future improvements quickly, stick to the following design principles:



RTM's three design principles: one single system, stick to the standard, and future-proof.

No more customisations, only localisations

It sounds semantic, but it isn't. As a rule of thumb: avoid customisations (adding a country-specific field, building a workaround for a risk that barely happens) wherever you can. What you can offer is localisations: adding a local value, or a local language, within the standard data model and functionality.

Customisations should always be validated by a steering-committee decision and treated as documented exceptions.

7. Getting priority: how to have the conversation with HRIT

Here's the uncomfortable part: while you, as TA, are the business owner and represent the most important users of the ATS, you're usually not the contract owner or budget manager (that sits most likely within HRIT, service delivery or HRIS). Read that again, really. And with that realization we also know HRIT's priorities are structurally different from yours and governed by the everyday problems of HR: payroll, workforce planning, and learning and development all compete for HRIT's attention. Even if you do own the budget, in all cases you still need HRIT for Integrations and Core data alignment.

HRIT thinks in cost, landscape fit, stability and manageability of the tools in the landscape, and in setting priority against other HR/SAP projects, not primarily in recruiting functionality. Most HRIT departments are also overloaded: organisational-data clean-up, Onboarding 2.0, payroll projects. A large, unscoped-sounding ask like “we should move to SmartRecruiters” is exactly the kind of project that gets quietly postponed.

It also means HRIT will often not see the functional gap you look at every day of missing functionality or slow improvements. In our own words: SuccessFactors Recruiting is a twenty-year-old Opel Astra, slowly falling apart. SmartRecruiters is a self-driving Tesla. That distinction is obvious to you as a recruitment leader, HRIT just sees that there's a car available for you to drive.

How to counter the usual arguments for waiting

- **“OD and masterdata clean-up in SF EC has to be finished first, or SR will be polluted.”** SmartRecruiters absolutely thrives on clean master data, but its architecture is solid and flexible enough to build against imperfect OD (locations and cost centres varying by country or label are fine to build against). The clean-up happens within underlying values, not structurally on the datamodel or mapping. We can absolutely build a clean, future proof Smartrecruiters on imperfect Core data (just as Recruitment can run fine on it now).
- **“Position management isn't fully implemented yet.”** Integrations with SF position management on job creation or hire (starting onboarding) are convenient, not essential. RTM has implemented SmartRecruiters against every type of HRIS setup, standalone or fully integrated, and more often than not, the current handover between recruitment and onboarding is already manual anyway.
- **“We don't have the resources available right now.”** This one's trickier. Yes, you need some expertise from HRIS on current and future configuration, and from HRIT on integrations. But most of the heavy lifting is done by your implementation partner, and ongoing maintenance and support for SmartRecruiters will likely be lighter than what SF Recruiting demands today. It can be worth investing in temporary external support to bridge the gap.

So of course you’ll need to align priority and resources with HRIS/HRIT, and there will be plenty of puzzles to solve and match: but in practice we’ve never met any truly blocking topics to start configuration, or even go live on a future proof, scalable setup. Happy to discuss.

8. Choosing an Implementation Partner

SAP sells the SmartRecruiters licences (often as part of a larger Successfactors contract), it does not offer implementation services! You’ll need a separate partner to do this. Finding and selecting an implementation partner is a separate workstream, and one many organisations underestimate, both in duration (typically 2–6 months for selection alone) and in how much it determines the outcome. And as we all know: the tool is only as good as it’s configuration and integration into your processes and landscape!

There are generally two routes here. First, your existing HR tech implementation partner: they already know your organisation and, ideally, your current configuration and integrations. It's often easier to contract them than a new partner, since a master agreement is probably already in place. A solid starting point. Bear in mind, though, that implementing TA tech (and SmartRecruiters specifically) calls for different expertise (especially upper-funnel, around career sites and candidate sources) than implementing core HR tech.

Second, you can go for a specialised recruitment tech implementation partner. This usually gives Recruitment leaders more choice to find a partner that talks our language, and brings specific Recruitment expertise. Also: your project does not compete against the overall priorities between your HRIT and this supplier.

Finding your best match is more than finding a configuration partner. A few questions worth asking yourself *and* a potential SmartRecruiters implementation partner, to find the right fit:

- **SmartRecruiters experience.** How many SmartRecruiters implementations have they actually done? do they bring broad SAP or generic ATS experience?
- **Complexity match.** Do they have experience in your specific sector, at your size and complexity (multi-label, multi-country, multi-language, multi-culture, multi-location)? Ask for references. Do they match your required scale, process rigor and bureaucracy (especially for contracting, DPIAs and DPAs)?

- **Recruitment expertise.** What's their overall experience in recruitment tech? Have they only done SmartRecruiters, or other ATS platforms too? Which career site, job board and CRM integrations have they delivered?
- **Consultancy or configuration.** What kind of (recruitment) consultancy do they offer, just configuration, or also solution design, consultancy, or adjacent services like Recruitment Marketing?
- **Availability.** Do they have people available, for your timelines? Where is their implementation team based (on-site, remote, or both)? For international rollouts: which languages does their team speak, beyond English and their HQ language? Which time zones do they work in, for the project, and later for support?
- **Approach & Role.** What's their typical approach to a transition like this? What best practices and designs do they bring? How do they run the programme (including PM tooling support)? What do they expect from you as a client?
- **Project management & governance:** Who's in the lead for project management: do they also schedule meetings, align with internal stakeholders and keep track of deliverables? How do they typically set up the project organisation? Is this a separate project, or part of a bigger programme (with dependencies)?
- **Maintenance & support.** What does their support model look like after go-live, who do recruiters and hiring managers actually call?
- **Price model:** Fixed price, or time and materials? (very often Integration effort is hard to define due to mutual complexity)? Which services are included? How to budget for scope changes, and future releases.

Partner fit is a mutual responsibility

In the end it all boils down to Partner fit: do you speak the same language, do you feel this supplier truly understands you, and they will go the extra mile to make it work for you?

That also means you need to be a good client. You'll need to assign resources and expertise. Be reasonable on budget (value for money) and planning. Take ownership of the internal process, ensure all internal stakeholders are aligned and be able to take decisions when needed.

Planning your implementation

Typically you'll need: 3–6 months for Business Design and decision-making (Section 5, largely on the TA side, and the one phase you can start today, independent of a partner); 2–4 months to select a partner, which can run in parallel; 2–4 months for contracting and preparation; followed by 6–18 months of configuration and hypercare.

All in, plan for at least 12 months from a standing start to go-live (more for multi-country scope). So, better to get started right away.

9. Common pitfalls

- **Assuming you can stay on SuccessFactors Recruiting.** You can't, by default your next contract renewal replaces it with SmartRecruiters licences. Not knowing your renewal date, or not asking SAP about opening the contract early, hands the timing decision to your contract instead of to you.
- **Treating it as a lift-and-shift.** Copying SuccessFactors Recruiting workflows and current workarounds into SmartRecruiters configuration forfeits most of the functional, process and AI benefits that motivated the move in the first place.
- **Leaving coexistence unowned.** A fade-in/fade-out approach is the right default, but it means two recruiting systems and two candidate experiences running at once for a period (that needs business support, explicit ownership, and a clear termination date, not ad hoc handling).

- **Leaving GDPR (and other compliance) decisions until go-live week.** Getting sign-off from compliance on your DPIA, DPA, updated privacy policies and AI Act stance can stall your whole project if it isn't discussed in time.
- **Assuming SAP's sync phases cover everything.** SAP's Employee Central roadmap is necessary but not sufficient: job boards, assessment tools and reporting integrations stay your recruitment team's responsibility.
- **Being held back by HRIT's roadmap.** Without a clear business ask and a named TA-side owner, this project competes for attention against clean-up work with louder short-term deadlines, and loses.
- **No clear ownership after go-live.** SmartRecruiters doesn't run itself: someone needs to own the product once it's live (backlog, releases, integrations, continuous improvement). Without a named Product Owner, quick wins get lost and configuration drifts back into ad hoc requests.

10. Final remarks

The good news: you can (and will) finally get to move into a proper ATS. We're betting SmartRecruiters is a major step forward for your Recruitment engine. Just make sure you get ahead of this transition, and take ownership to meet your own (and your business's) needs and timelines.

It'll be one hell of a ride, but totally worth it.

About Recruitment Tech Masters

Recruitment Tech Masters is a Rotterdam based recruitment technology consultancy firm. We've run over 150 recruitment tech projects (strategy, selection, implementation, optimisation) and worked with just about every ATS, including SmartRecruiters, so we really know its strengths and gaps. Our clients range from ASML, Rabobank, Danone, Action, KPN, ERIKS, Royal Terberg Group, Dirk van den Broek and WeFashion, to public-sector organisations like Gemeente Amsterdam, Erasmus MC and Gemeente Helmond. We offer business consultancy to get the most from your (future) recruitment landscape. A new ATS, deliver the best careersite in the world, update your Candidate experience, implement AI Matching, or get sign-off from Compliancy? We've gotten our hands dirty on it, so you don't have to.

We are truly independent and have no commercial ties with any supplier, no kickback fees, or not paid by SAP, SmartRecruiters or any other vendor to recommend one platform over another. Our job is to help you make the best decision possible whether, when and how to move, and we love to run that transition with you (from initial assessment to go-live and beyond). We've got a great team to make it fun and smooth ride!

Get in touch if: you liked this whitepaper (or think we missed something), want to talk smart recruitment, or just want to share experiences. We gladly take the time for you.

Get in touch with us via wearertm.com

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We can't wait to share ideas and experiences, or get the conversation going with HRIT if needed.

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