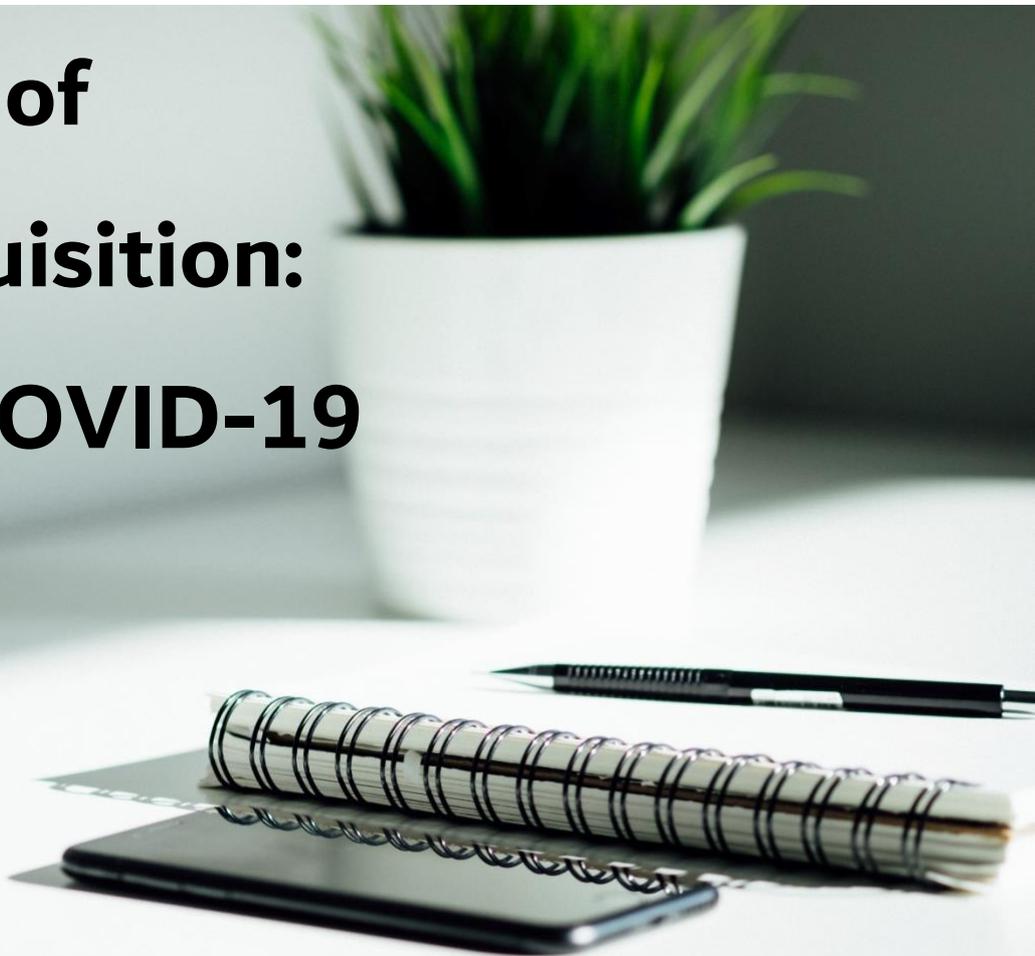




**PARISIMA**

**The Future of  
Talent Acquisition:  
impact of COVID-19**





## Introduction

No one could have anticipated the events that unfolded at the start of 2020 - a global pandemic, an all-time low in oil prices resulting in an economic recession with industries like aviation hit the hardest, and cancellation and postponement of major events.

One of the biggest impacts has been on businesses and their employees – with salary reductions, unpaid leave and redundancies commonplace.

Parisima set out to conduct a survey to find out what has changed in Talent Acquisition and how these changes may have impacted processes and priorities. Although there are some obvious immediate negative changes, it's an opportunity to assess the agility of businesses to adapt to the change and may lead to being more fit for purpose once we return to the 'new normal'.

## Redundancies and Rehiring

Unsurprisingly 52% of businesses are making fewer hires in 2020 compared to 2019. But interestingly, 76% of businesses said they would consider re-hiring people that they have made redundant. It's so important that businesses are considerate of employees and how they are treated during redundancy rounds in order to maintain a strong company reputation in the market as well as the opportunity to rehire valued employees when the time comes.

Even in these extraordinary times, there are some glimmers of positivity - 29% said that they intend to make more hires in 2020 than 2019. This shows that there are businesses thriving and adapting during this difficult time.





## How has Covid-19 affected recruitment?

Only 5% of businesses said that recruitment had been unaffected, and they were operating business as usual. 24% of businesses said they were on a complete recruitment freeze but an additional 56% said they have a recruitment freeze but are still making critical hires. 10% of businesses are still recruiting but more slowly and 5% said they had increased hiring during Covid-19.

The three biggest concerns for HR and Talent Acquisition professionals are: cost cutting, losing great talent from the business and the expectations of hiring managers.

Cost cutting is unavoidable and often outside the control of Talent Acquisition. However, there is an opportunity to maintain relationships with great talent and hire them back where possible. An outplacement or alumni program will go a long way to protect employer brand.

Working with hiring managers to manage expectations and proactively creating a talent pipeline so hiring can be quick to return, will also help sustain stakeholder relationships.

What's extremely promising is that 67% said they anticipate a return to hiring in the second half of 2020.

## Impact on processes

62% of businesses have had to change their processes during lockdown. This is not necessarily a bad thing as it's an opportunity to increase efficiency during downtime.

There are a range of issues facing talent acquisition including: getting offers out, getting offers accepted, relocation and assessment processes. But the three biggest challenges are:

- Processing visas – processing visas has been difficult during the closures, but the government has worked hard to give flexibility including automatic visa renewals, allowances paid to employees on unpaid leave, and no fines for overstays.



- Onboarding – no easy task to do remotely but being creative with technology and support can make it more manageable. Couriering laptops to new joiners and conducting online induction programmes are examples of how businesses are managing the onboarding process.
- Internal decision making – this uncertainty, has slowed decision making but this will start to recover as things open up such as deciding what constitutes a critical hire within each department and which hires can wait until the path to recovery is clearer.

## Has COVID-19 influenced the need to digitize?

Unsurprisingly, most businesses have increased the use of technology in the talent acquisition process during lockdown. What is surprising though, is that 20% of respondents said that they haven't increased the use of technology. Many businesses were already using these tools effectively and some said that their recruitment has slowed or stopped, to the point of not requiring additional support.

Automated online interviews, using pre-recorded questions, followed by video interviews using tools like Zoom and online assessments were the top three tools that businesses have been using more. Over 60% of businesses said they will continue to use these tools after Covid-19 as they have helped the efficiency of the business. 33% said they will use some of the technology afterwards but will revert to their usual processes. 5% said that they do not foresee using these new technologies when they revert to their usual processes.





## Recovery – the ‘new normal’

The majority of respondents indicated that they will be increasing direct hiring – through company portals, job boards, referrals and internal hiring teams - and reducing the use of traditional recruitment agencies. There may be a need for businesses in the short term to look for more innovative recruitment solutions to support their bounce back. This could come in the form of lower cost onsite models or short term hiring of Talent Acquisition professionals to help with critical hiring.

Beyond the obvious need to safely open businesses and borders, finding more efficient ways of recruiting is the biggest priority in the return to the ‘new normal’. Using more technology and automation will be fast tracked to support agility of business strategy.

Candidates will need to be realistic in terms of compensation and regulation will need to adapt to make it easier to make hires. As many people have lost their jobs and are considering moves back to home country or other locations, there is an opportunity to recruit great talent in the local market if you are able to make decisions quickly.

Businesses and individuals need to be flexible and agile to meet the new market demands. For employees, this means upskilling and development to ensure they are able to meet the needs of the business and ultimately, clients.





## Five opportunities to future proof your business

### **Recruitment diagnostics**

Looking at every stage of the recruitment process, from resource planning to induction, using qualitative and quantitative research-based methodologies to assesses the existing team and the way they work, gives you insight into the performance of your recruiters compared with your competitors. The overall performance of your recruitment function is then assessed to determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of your business.

### **Outplacement and Alumni**

Leading employers should offer support to impacted employees, to help them transition to alternative employment and to protect your employer brand. Maintaining those relationships are essential, especially if you are considering re-hiring your Alumni at a later date.

### **Talent pooling - Market Mapping and Pipelining**

One way to future proof your talent pipeline is Talent Pooling. Shifting to a more proactive recruiting model ensures you are engaged with the best people and are ready to hire for future opportunities to ensure long term success. This is also a great way for Talent Acquisition to maintain connections with Hiring Managers during slowed recruitment.

### **Effective Emiratisation - improve your In Country Value (ICV) score**

In Country Value is the total spend retained in country that benefits business growth, contributes to human capital development and stimulates productivity within the economy. Improve your ICV score by effectively hiring, developing and retaining top UAE National talent.

### **Recruitment Training and Development – up-skilling during the slow down**

Use this time to provide Recruiters and Hiring Managers with the skills, expertise and best practices to identify, assess, hire and build the most talented teams possible. Now is a great time to up-skill your team, while business as usual recruitment has slowed.





Although it's been one of the toughest years in living memory both socially and economically, there are lots of reasons to be cautiously optimistic for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. Looking after current employees as well as those you are having to part ways with, will protect your employer brand and allow you to recover more quickly as the market returns. Assessing your agility and flexibility and making changes to processes for the better, presents a unique opportunity to emerge from the crisis with a leaner more technologically advanced organisation. The 'new normal' is upon us, it is how we react to it that will define the outcomes of a disruptive but innovation inspiring period in all of our working lives.

### Research methodology

- The survey: 'Future of Talent Acquisition: impacts of COVID-19 in 2020' was conducted online in June 2020.
- The respondents were C-level, HR and Heads of Talent Acquisition from Parisima's network in the UAE and KSA across a range of industries.
- The survey comprised 16 questions

### About Parisima

A strategic talent advisory and delivery business enabling clients to improve their performance through better talent acquisition. Parisima achieves this by implementing world-class talent acquisition functions with the right people and technology or by undertaking the projects directly, allowing clients to fully outsource their challenges.

From Board and Executive moves, through to training, strategic hiring projects and complex recruitment programmes across geographies, Parisima has the expertise to provide best practice, cost effective and agile solutions.

Optimising the relationship between recruitment and advisory, Parisima creates best-in-class talent solutions

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