



# RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION

Graduation Internship: Business Research and Advice  
(CU34780V22)

**What are the best strategies  
TieTalent can use to increase  
the sales of its Sourcer  
service?**

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## Foreword

I am incredibly grateful to present my research justification, titled "What are the best strategies TieTalent can use to increase the sales of its Sourcer service?". This work is the result of countless hours of research, analysis, and reflection, and I am thankful for the assistance I have received throughout this academic path.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Marc Trillou, the CEO of TieTalent, who was also my In-company Supervisor during the graduation internship. His knowledge, invaluable insights, and assistance have all played an important role in influencing the direction and quality of this research justification. He has continuously inspired me to push the boundaries of my capabilities.

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Furthermore, I am grateful to my mother for her unwavering faith in me and constant encouragement during this research journey. Her love and understanding provided me with the strength and dedication necessary to reach this point in my academic path.

Finally, I'd like to thank the TieTalent team members – Mr. Gregoire Plaignaud, Ms. Michelle Aanen, Mr. Morio Nakatsuka, Ms. Sofia Bedonni and Mr. Xavier Lassiera Pérez – who graciously shared their time and insights, adding to the depth of this research. The results and conclusions of this research justification have greatly benefited from their willingness to participate in interviews.

It is a privilege to have been given the chance to work on this research justification, and I am humbled by the group effort and cooperation that have enabled its completion. I'm hoping that this work can act as a starting point for further research and development.

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## 1. Introduction

The challenge of finding top tech talent has grown for businesses all around the world. Traditional recruitment techniques are no longer enough to bring in and retain top talents in the rapidly evolving and competitive job market today. Finding the right people has become more difficult for businesses as a result of the fast-paced development of the tech sector and the increasing need for skilled professionals with expert knowledge (Brunello & Wruuck, 2021).

With its cutting-edge solutions that match businesses and job seekers, the Swiss IT & Digital Marketing recruiting startup TieTalent has revolutionized the market (TieTalent SA, 2023). TieTalent has altered the hiring process, making it quicker, more productive, and more efficient by utilizing AI technology and a thorough understanding of the tech sector (TieTalent SA, 2021). Nevertheless, despite their success, TieTalent's services and tactics still have room for improvement. According to an interview with the CEO, for instance, its Sourcer model has been criticized (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023).

The Sourcer model, a 1-year subscription service designed to assist businesses in hiring the best talent, is one of the solutions that TieTalent offers as part of its portfolio. The Sourcer model is a recruiting service that provides companies with quick and simple access to top candidates (TieTalent SA, 2023).

The focus of this thesis, however, is on how TieTalent can turn this service into a money-making venture. To increase the profitability of this service, the Sourcer model's advantages and disadvantages have been examined through interviews and discussions with team members of different departments in TieTalent. The goal is to offer insightful information about how TieTalent can improve its service to offer more value to its customers while also increasing revenue.

The results of this study will be useful to the company in terms of how to further improve its services, as well as to external tech recruiters who are interested in the industry's trends, growth, and difficulties in attracting and retaining top employees.

### 1.1. Company/product analysis & trends and developments in their industry/product group

The Swiss company TieTalent was established in 2017 with the mission of simplifying the hiring process and becoming the top platform in Europe for IT and Digital Marketing professionals. Its reverse recruitment platform, launched in 2018, is based in Renens, Switzerland, while the bigger part of sales and operations activities are in Barcelona, Spain, and Stuttgart, Germany. The company, which is established as a private limited company in Switzerland (SARL), has received CHF1.5M in capital over four rounds, with Spicehaus Partners AG providing the most recent round of funding in 2022 (Crunchbase Inc., 2022).

Five departments make up TieTalent's team-based organizational structure: Sales, Operations, Marketing, Human Resources, and Information Technology. The company, which currently has 26 employees, values "trust, ownership, excellence, passion and having fun together" (TieTalent SA, 2021). Fluency in German and/or French, good communication skills, and adaptability in a fast-

paced setting are all desired in new hires, as well as 0-1 years of work experience (TieTalent SA, 2023).

TieTalent provides a range of services to both businesses and talents. For talents, especially IT and Digital Marketing experts based in Germany and Switzerland, TieTalent provides a distinctive method of job finding. Talents don't apply for jobs or write motivational letters the conventional way; they just fill out their profile on the platform (How TieTalent Works for Talents, 2021). Companies can apply to them directly through the platform once there's a match between the talent's skills and the job requirements. The interview process is then started by TieTalent's Talent Agents (How TieTalent Works for Talents, 2021). With the help of this "reverse recruitment" strategy, job seekers can find new opportunities without the typical barriers to entry. Talents also get access to exclusive resources and advantages provided by TieTalent's partners, which can help them advance their careers (How TieTalent Works for Talents, 2021).

On the other side, TieTalent offers companies an automated method of finding and employing specialized IT and Digital Marketing professionals. Businesses can save time and effort on the hiring process by using the platform, which only presents them with the best prospects for open positions. 'On-demand' and 'Sourcer' are the two main services provided. The 'On-demand' service gives clients the option to pay only when they hire a candidate, giving recruitment expenses some flexibility (On-demand Hire, 2023). Contrarily, the 'Sourcer' service uses a 1-year subscription-based business model that enables companies to recruit as many applicants as they need to maintain a talent pipeline (Sourcer SaaS, 2023). Mid-sized businesses and huge corporations like L'Oréal and Nintendo are among TieTalent's clients.

### Our Plans

ESSENTIAL	Most popular PROFESSIONAL	PREMIUM
<p>The perfect solution for companies looking to streamline their recruitment process and ensure a 100% follow-up guarantee.</p>	<p>Designed for companies that require a more targeted talent search, making it the perfect solution for organizations looking to stay ahead of competition.</p>	<p>Ideal for organizations seeking comprehensive recruitment solutions that optimize candidate selection and enhance overall outcomes.</p>
<p><a href="#">Try for Free</a> or <a href="#">Schedule a Call</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Try for Free</a> or <a href="#">Schedule a Call</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Try for Free</a> or <a href="#">Schedule a Call</a></p>
<p><b>The Basics to get your team sourcing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Access to the TieTalent Talent Pool</li> <li>✓ Powerful Search</li> <li>✓ Employer Branding</li> <li>✓ Direct Chat with Talents</li> <li>✓ Collaborate with Your Team</li> <li>✓ Sourcing Training with Our Experts</li> <li>✓ Dedicated Account Manager</li> <li>✓ Tailored Talent Pre-selection</li> <li>✓ 100% Follow-up Guaranteed</li> </ul>	<p><b>All Essential features, plus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Advanced Talent Location Search Features</li> <li>✓ Upfront Talent Salary Expectations Information</li> <li>✓ Access to 50+ Search Criteria</li> <li>✓ Up to 200 Matching Talents/Month</li> <li>✓ Priority Support</li> </ul>	<p><b>All Professional features, plus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dedicated Talent Agent to Support the Full Hiring Process</li> <li>✓ Hand-picked Talent Pre-selection</li> <li>✓ Reference Check</li> <li>✓ Salary Negotiation</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Sourcer Subscription Plans (Sourcer SaaS, 2023)

Taking into consideration that tech recruiting is the main activity of TieTalent, it can be stated that the company relies mainly on technology to match IT professionals with job openings, hence IT is crucial to the company's operations. Bringing together IT and Digital Marketing experts and employers is a key component of the production process. Resumes and job ads are inputs, while successful matches between businesses and tech professionals as well as interviews are outputs. Because it focuses on identifying applicants to fill job opportunities, TieTalent is a pull-oriented business.

TieTalent's goals include improving the recruiting process through technology, saving clients time and money, and becoming Europe's top career-growth platform for tech professionals. Key objectives include enhancing the platform's user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) and continually releasing new features enabling talents and companies to use it with ease. One important goal is to generate revenue through the Sourcer model (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023), which is the core focus of this thesis.

Due to the growing need for highly trained IT professionals, the tech recruiting industry has experienced tremendous growth. From 2019 to 2023, the worldwide IT staffing market is predicted to increase at a CAGR of 6.34% (Technavio, 2019). With its user-friendly platform and a blend of human and technological knowledge, TieTalent wants to expand its services to other areas, starting with France (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023), and is investing in AI-based recruiting solutions to automate candidate screening and selection procedures, following the current recruitment trends (Marler, 2020). Upskilling and reskilling programs may provide a competitive advantage in the face of increased skill demands (Gupta & Singhal, 2020). LinkedIn Recruiter, Lionstep, HoneyPot, and Get in IT.de are competitors in the tech recruiting market; however, TieTalent sets itself apart by specializing in IT and Digital Marketing positions, based only in Germany and Switzerland (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). Marc added that, in contrast to LinkedIn Recruiter, TieTalent was able to provide additional filters to help users find the perfect talent. The distinctive selling pitch of TieTalent was the ability to search for talents by the number of years of experience in specific skills, which is not possible with LinkedIn Recruiter, and access to more information about talents, including salary expectations (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023).

## 1.2. Problem Analysis

In January 2022, TieTalent released Sourcer, their active sourcing platform, intending to optimize the hiring process via the use of technology. Initial projections called for a monthly recurring revenue of CHF50,000, a sign of product market fit and a solid foundation for expanding the strategy across Europe. However, Sourcer has not performed as TieTalent had hoped, and there have been several difficulties (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). The Sourcer service's poor performance, which has fallen short of initial projections for monthly recurring revenues, is the issue that needs to be fixed. An interview with Marc Trillou, the CEO of TieTalent, revealed several additional problems, one of which was the talent matching system's poor response rate, which fell short of what recruiters had hoped for (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). The fact that the search features weren't working properly was another issue. Although TieTalent competes mostly with LinkedIn Recruiter, which has a response rate of 4-8% for tech talents, the talent response rate on TieTalent was also a source of concern (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). According to Marc, in order to attract recruiters to its platform,



TieTalent had to set itself apart by offering a 60% positive response rate, which is substantially higher than the industry average.

The underperformance of the Sourcer service is preventing TieTalent from expanding its strategy across Europe. Clients of TieTalent, as well as the Sales and Operations teams, are being impacted by the issue. Clients are not receiving the outcomes they anticipated from the 1-year subscription Sourcer service, and TieTalent is not generating the anticipated monthly recurring revenues. Moreover, client acquisition has been challenging for TieTalent's client executives, who have only successfully sold a few subscriptions over the past year. Since Sourcer's debut in January 2022, a lack of success has been observed (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023).

Many symptoms of the issue can be seen, such as difficulties in talent acquisition, a shortage of local talent in Germany and Switzerland, and a matching system that fails to find the best fit for businesses (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). Moreover, the platform contained bugs, and there was no quality assurance procedure in place to guarantee that all TieTalent's fundamental features were functioning properly for the clients (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). Also, TieTalent has repeatedly altered its strategy regarding customer success, operations, and sales, indicating that the business is still investigating the product-market fit.

TieTalent must address the numerous issues it has come across, such as talent acquisition difficulties, platform bugs, quality assurance problems, operations issues, customer success issues, and marketing strategy to fix the problem.

### 1.3. Research Questions

As a result of the problem analysis and to better identify the strategies that may be utilized to make the service 'Sourcer' fulfil its potential for TieTalent, the following research questions were developed.

**Research Question:** What are the best strategies TieTalent can use to increase the sales of its Sourcer service?

**Sub Question 1:** What were the pain points with TieTalent's Sourcer service?

**Sub Question 2:** What adjustments may be made to strengthen TieTalent's online visibility and the UX/UI of the Sourcer service landing page?

**Sub Question 3:** How can TieTalent implement some of the best practices and methods to further improve its recruiting services?

#### 1.4. Project Aim

The following professional products will be delivered in month June of the year 2023:

**Competitor analysis:** The analysis examined competitor web designs in the recruiting sector, with an emphasis on their landing pages and user interfaces (UI). It further highlighted best practices that may be used to improve the look of TieTalent's Sourcer landing page.

**New design for the Sourcer landing page on TieTalent:** A fresh layout for the Sourcer landing page was created based on the results of the competitive study. The design included features and tools targeted at simplifying the onboarding process for clients, enhancing overall user experience (UX), and adhering to standards set by the recruiting industry for online platforms. The updated layout is aesthetically pleasing, user-friendly, and responsive across a range of platforms, including PCs, tablets, and mobile devices.

**Success stories for boosting credibility:** For this professional product, the accomplishments of some businesses that have used TieTalent's services successfully were gathered and presented in the form of a webpage. The success stories were made to boost credibility and trustworthiness and show the beneficial effects of the service on these firms' hiring practices and results.

**Recommendations on enhancing overall recruitment services:** The literature review looked into industry best practices and found areas where automation is possible. The paper offers useful and doable suggestions for utilizing automation tools, technology and employer branding to accelerate hiring procedures, increase productivity, and improve the overall client and talent acquisition experience.

The project's aim is SMART as well (Doran, 1981), as it is:

- **Specific:** Expanding TieTalent's online presence and visibility while also enhancing the user interface (UI) of the Sourcer landing page.
- **Measurable:** Through indicators like user engagement, conversion rate, and client retention and acquisition rates.
- **Achievable:** Through conducting a competitive analysis of rival recruitment firms' websites, suggesting a new look for the Sourcer landing page, showcasing success stories to boost credibility, and offering suggestions for enhancing overall recruitment services.
- **Relevant:** To the objective of TieTalent to expand and improve their online recruitment services.
- **Time-bound:** Must be finished by a particular date as defined above.

These professional products will serve as proof of the author's competence in the International Business program learning outcome of Marketing & Sales.

## 2. Research Approach

### 2.1. What were the pain points with TieTalent's Sourcer service?

#### 2.1.1. Review of Relevant Literature

According to an article from Panel (2020), published in Forbes, the first step in assessing an “underperforming product or service” is to examine the customer experience and pinpoint any problems or pain points that might be turning off customers. By doing so, the company will be better able to stand out from the competition and identify areas for improvement (Panel, 2020). To further elaborate, finding the weaknesses of a product or service is crucial for development and improvement and often involves conducting internal interviews. According to Waack (2022), internal stakeholders can offer special insights into the product development process because they are actively involved in many parts of the product's lifecycle, from ideation to implementation. Also, internal stakeholders who have used the product in their regular workflows can offer input on the usability, functionality, and performance of the product. Such feedback can assist pinpoint problem areas, revealing unseen problems, and offering suggestions for enhancement, resulting in a more polished and user-friendly product or service (User Interviews Inc., 2019). According to Gemser and Leenders (2011), including internal stakeholders from all departments in the user interview process will foster an overall awareness of the goals, demands, and especially pain points of the product. As a result, decision-making, problem-solving, and product development could all be improved (User Interviews Inc., 2019).

#### 2.1.2. Operationalization of the Variable(s) Contained in the Sub Question

Concept	Variable	Indicator	Interview Questions
Pain Points	Performance of Sourcer service on the market	Initial expectations	What were the initial expectations for the service's performance in the market?
		Contributing factors to the performance	What factors do you think contributed to the service's poor performance over the past year?
		Changes made in terms of design and marketing strategy	Are there any changes to the service's design or marketing strategy that the company was considering to improve its performance?
		Competitive landscape and positioning	Can you provide any insights into the competitive landscape for this service, and how the company is positioning itself against its competitors?
		Success metrics used	What metrics do you use to measure the service's success?
	Customer feedback	Internal data on customer feedback and behavior	What kind of data do you have about customer feedback and behavior in relation to the service?

	and/or complaints		Have you noticed any common issues or concerns that clients have had with the Sourcer service? If so, what are they?
		Specific customer complaints	Can you describe the specific issues that clients have been experiencing with the Sourcer service over the past year?
			What feedback have you received from clients about the specific aspects of the Sourcer service that are not working well?
		Customer insights' impact on product development	What role do customer insights play in shaping the service's development and improvement?
	Technical issues	What are the most common issues or bugs that users have reported in the past months when using Sourcer service?	
	Effectiveness of Sourcer service	Success in finding the right candidate through the platform	How successful have you been in finding the right candidates for clients using the Sourcer model over the past months?
		Types of positions that are challenging to fill	Are there any particular types of positions that have been particularly challenging to fill using the Sourcer service?
		Internal issues or limitations encountered	Are there any particular issues or limitations that you've encountered with the Sourcer service that you think could be improved upon?

Table 1: Operationalization | Sub Question 1

### 2.1.3. Units of Analysis

To acquire qualitative information, viewpoints, and opinions about the shortcomings of TieTalent's Sourcer service, interviews were the main source of data. This means that the information gathered and analyzed to respond to this research question has come from employees of TieTalent, who have knowledge of or experience with the problems with the Sourcer service.

These included two employees from the Sales department – CEO, Marc Trillou and a Client Executive, Sofia Bedonni, whose main activities are connected to finding prospective clients for the Sourcer service as well as getting customer feedback. Therefore, those have good overview of common customer complaints throughout the past year. Another two employees from the Operations department were also interviewed – Senior Talent Sourcer, Gregoire Plaignaud and a Talent Sourcer, Michelle Aanen, who work daily with onboarding clients and presenting the Sourcer service. Consequently, they also have insights into the pains and limitations of the service, hence relevant. Last, but not least, two employees from the IT department were interviewed. The Front-end developer, Xavier Lassiera Pérez, and Product Owner, Morio Nakatsuka, have been working on improving the online platform of the Sourcer service for providing a better UX and UI. They have also encountered problems and limitations of the service; therefore, their insights were also found to be important.

#### 2.1.4. Data Collection & Data Analysis

Flexible interview protocols were created to assure validity as interviews have been selected as the best approach for data collection and analysis. These protocols contained open-ended questions that enabled interviewees to give thorough answers. Interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on their responses or provide more information at any time during the interview.

The interview protocols were developed in tight alignment with the research goals, and the formed questions were thoughtfully prepared to be pertinent to the specific job and everyday responsibilities of the employees, enabling more insightful responses. Five employees within the organization, each of whom had a fixed contract, and the CEO of TieTalent made up the sample size for the research question. The only difference between the employees was how long they had been employed by the company, which ranged from 6 months to 2 years.

#### 2.1.5. Limitations, Reliability & Validity

Due to a variety of factors, interviews with internal stakeholders can be in general unreliable and limited. These may include interviewee subjectivity and biases, a narrow perspective, and time and resource limitations (Aamodt et al., 2006). To have a more precise and thorough picture of the topic under discussion, it was crucial to be aware of these limits and employ a variety of information sources. The issues can be minimized and get more trustworthy insights from internal stakeholder interviews by considering these restrictions and combining data from interviews, documentation, and other sources (Aamodt et al., 2006). Another drawback was the difficulty to get feedback from clients or consumers who were unhappy with the service or showed no interest in it. Contacting clients was not an option, due to all the scenarios explained above, namely the Sourcer service underperforming.

## 2.2. What adjustments may be made to strengthen TieTalent's online visibility and the UX/UI of the Sourcer service landing page?

### 2.2.1. Review of Relevant Literature

According to Storozhuk (2022), the trend of consumers researching products and services online, the need for a solid online reputation, the opportunity to reach a global audience, and the lower cost of online marketing compared to traditional advertising are some of the factors for companies putting more emphasize on their online visibility. In an article from Kostova (2021), it is pointed out how poor UX design can harm a company's reputation and result in lost sales. Furthermore, the article advises companies to prioritize UX design as a component of their overall digital strategy to gain a competitive edge in the market (Kostova, 2021). In research from Alexandra (2020), improved UX can lead to higher conversion rates and increased brand loyalty, making it simpler for users to interact with a product. To make great UX a selling point, the article from Alexandra (2020) also suggests integrating UX into the brand and making it a key component of the selling strategy for the specific service. Consequently, TieTalent can draw more consumers to their recruiting service Sourcer by giving UX and online visibility a priority.

### 2.2.2. Operationalization of the Variable(s) Contained in the Sub Question

Concept	Variable	Indicator	Interview Questions
UI/UX Design	User satisfaction	Customer and internal feedback	Can you walk me through the process of using the Sourcer service? What steps do you take, and what challenges have you encountered?
			How do you typically communicate with clients about the Sourcer service? What questions do they ask, and how do you address any concerns they may have?
			How does the frontend design and interface impact the usability and functionality of the Sourcer service?
UI/UX Improvements	Effectiveness	Internal feedback	Based on your experience, what changes or improvements do you think would be most helpful for improving the effectiveness of the Sourcer service?
	Usability and functionality		Can you suggest any new features or improvements to the Sourcer service that could enhance its usability or functionality?
Concept	Dimension	Variable	Indicator
Online Visibility	Webpage analytics	Page views	Number of page views and time per page view
		Form submissions	Number of total form submission
		New contacts and clients	Number of new contacts and customers
		Bounce rate	Percentage of bounce rate
Competitive Analysis	Competitive landscape	Competitor websites	Features, UI/UX design, usability and functionality

Table 2: Operationalization | Sub Question 2

### 2.2.3. Units of Analysis

Employees from a variety of departments, including Sales, Operations, and IT, provided insights on the internal usability and ideas for improvements of TieTalent's Sourcer service during interviews, which served as the primary data source for the research. The CEO, Marc Trillou, the Client Executive, Sofia Bedonni, the Senior Talent Sourcer, Gregoire Plaignaud, the Talent Sourcer, Michelle Aanen, the Front-end developer, Xavier Lassiera Pérez, and the Product Owner, Morio Nakatsuka, were all interviewed. These interviews had the goal of gathering data on service changes and usability problems. Additionally, a competitive analysis of rival websites providing comparable services was carried out to assess their online visibility and UX/UI. Together, these efforts made it possible to develop specific suggestions for enhancing the UX/UI of the Sourcer service landing page and TieTalent's online visibility.

### 2.2.4. Data Collection & Data Analysis

The interviews were performed utilizing flexible interview techniques, which allowed the interviewees to expand on their prior use of the Sourcer service and give extra information.

Finding competitors whose websites might be used as examples for creating a similar overview was a crucial factor to consider while performing competitive analysis. Truffls, Otta, Lionstep, and Hired were the competitors analyzed. These rivals were suggested for consideration during one-on-one discussions with TieTalent's product owner and CEO.

### 2.2.5. Limitations, Reliability & Validity

Interviews and competitive analysis are the data methodology used, and while they provide insights into TieTalent's online visibility and UX/UI, there are limitations. The research methodology solely depends on interviews with staff members from the sales, operations, information technology, and product departments, as well as competitive analysis of rival websites. According to Conrad & Schober (1999), in this case, it's possible that the volume and variety of data gathered will be reduced, and important information from other stakeholders or sources may be lost. Since responses may be arbitrary and influenced by personal perspectives and biases, the use of flexible interview techniques may lead to variations in data consistency and quality (Conrad & Schober, 1999).

## 2.3. How can TieTalent implement some of the best practices and methods to further improve its recruiting services?

### 2.3.1. Review of Relevant Literature

There are several crucial steps a tech recruitment startup can take to enhance its hiring processes. Using data and analytics to adopt a data-driven approach and modernizing the hiring process by using technologies like applicant tracking systems and AI-powered sourcing tools are the first steps (Al-Alawi et al., 2021). Putting a priority on the candidate experience by making sure the hiring process is user-friendly, open, and responsive as well as creating a genuine employer brand that represents the culture and values of your business to draw in tech talent are of huge importance too according to Alashmawy and Yazdanifard (2019). For startups in the tech recruitment industry looking to enhance their recruiting services, customer success stories can be a potent marketing tool, according to Howells (2021). Customer success stories can help companies create brand ambassadors and gain the trust of potential customers by demonstrating how their product or service has assisted other businesses in overcoming obstacles and achieving long-lasting benefits. The impact of success stories can be increased by disseminating them via various platforms, such as websites, newsletters, and social media (Howells, 2021).

### 2.3.2. Operationalization of the Variable(s) Contained in the Sub Question

Concept	Dimension	Variable	Indicator
Best practices	Use of technology	AI sourcing	Al-Alawi, A. I., Naureen, M., AlAlawi, E. F., & Al-Hadad, A. (2021). The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Recruitment Process Decision-Making.
		Applicant tracking systems (ATS)	
		Online assessments	Chungyalpa, W., & T, K. (2016). Best Practices and Emerging Trends in Recruitment and Selection. Journal

			of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management, 05(02).
Recruitment and selection	Social media	Employee referrals	Chungyalpa, W., & T, K. (2016). Best Practices and Emerging Trends in Recruitment and Selection. Journal of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management, 05(02).
Employer branding	Diversity and inclusion		Ly-Le, T. (2022). Hiring for gender diversity in tech. Journal of Management Development, 41(6), 393–403.
	Success stories		Howells, M. (2021, December 14). The Value of Customer Success Stories   B2B Marketing Blog. MulberryMC.
	Culture and values		Alashmawy, A., & Yazdanifard, A. P. D. R. (2019). A Review of the Role of Marketing in Recruitment and Talent Acquisition.

Table 3: Operationalization | Sub Question 3

### 2.3.3. Units of Analysis

Scholarly articles and case studies were the primary units of analysis for the topic of further improving TieTalent’s recruiting services. These were the main source of evidence that was examined to shed light on the research question. For the literature review to be of high quality and validity, reputable and pertinent articles and case studies had to be carefully chosen.

### 2.3.4. Data Collection & Data Analysis

The method of data collection has been carefully considered for this sub-question in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the results. A systematic approach was used to gather relevant literature on the topic from reputable sources such as Google Scholar and Research Gate. These platforms provided access to a huge selection of academic articles that have undergone thorough analysis and classification to draw out significant takeaways and identify new trends.

### 2.3.5. Limitations, Reliability & Validity

One potential limitation of this literature review is that it only includes academic papers and case studies, which might not accurately reflect the challenges of applying these best practices in TieTalent's situation. Another limitation is that the review did not consider any possible regional or cultural variations that might have an impact on the applicability of these best practices. The systematic approach used to gather and analyze reliable sources, as well as the careful selection of case studies, all contribute to the reliability and validity of this literature review.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Pain Points of TieTalent's Sourcer Service

#### 3.1.1. Initial Expectations

The initial expectations for the Sourcer service performance in the market included having regular users who would connect once or twice a week to look for new talents (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). The objective was to reach “recurring monthly revenues of CHF50,000 in order to demonstrate product-market fit” and lay a solid foundation for expanding the model across Europe. The team knew it would be an exploratory process in the beginning and require changing some elements to find the right product-market fit, so they did not set a specific timeframe for achieving these expectations.

#### 3.1.2. Contributing Factors to the Performance

Furthermore, several causes for Sourcer's poor performance over the previous 12 months were mentioned (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). These included difficulties finding talent, particularly in Germany, issues with the platform not performing as expected, and investigating product-market fit. Operational difficulties included modifying the customer success model and experimenting with various sales tactics, including contract length and pricing. It was also pointed out that there was initially no quality assurance procedure in place, which resulted in bugs and discouraged businesses from using the platform (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). Nevertheless, TieTalent has since applied the lessons it learned from these difficulties and put in place measures like having a Product Owner test the platform twice a week to make sure everything is functioning properly (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023).

#### 3.1.3. Changes Made in Terms of Design and Marketing Strategy

In terms of changes to the service's design or marketing strategy, it was found that none had been carried out, meaning that also no concrete marketing strategy was developed. Only a HubSpot-built landing page was used that was manually shared by client executives with potential clients. Up until recently, there was not even a webpage about Sourcer on TieTalent's website, and even then, it was just a landing page made on HubSpot (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023).

#### 3.1.4. Competitive Landscape and Positioning

About the competitive landscape and how well TieTalent is positioning itself against competitors, it was mentioned that TieTalent is up against several rivals in the market, such as job boards and recruitment agencies (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). With access to more than 50 tech specializations and a focus on talents with 3–10 years of experience, TieTalent sets itself apart (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). Honeybot, Talent.io, Instaffo, and Lionstep were mentioned as main competitors, but TieTalent distinguishes itself from them by providing more local talents in Germany and Switzerland and highly relevant candidates in general (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.5. Success Metrics Used

Several key performance indicators (KPIs) are used to assess the success of the Sourcer performance improvement efforts (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). The number of businesses using the service and willing to pay for it is an important KPI because it “shows commitment” and suggests that there is a “product-market fit”. Success would be demonstrated by reaching the target of “CHF 50,000 in monthly recurring revenue” (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). To further assess the value of TieTalent’s platform to businesses, additional metrics like the number of searches done monthly and the volume of hires made through are being monitored. According to Marc, NPS scores and interviews are also utilized to evaluate customer satisfaction and experience, enabling TieTalent to gather feedback and adjust services in accordance with customer demands (Marc Trillou, Personal Communication, March 2023). It was further pointed out that, even if a client hasn't yet made a hire, their satisfaction with the candidates they find on the platform can be measured as a sign of success in addition to placements (Michelle Aanen, Personal Communication, March 2023). It was explained that TieTalent places a strong emphasis on increasing the number of customer interviews scheduled as a key metric of providing value (Morio Nakatsuka, Personal Communication, March 2023). Also, it was added that “If the company would succeed to open profiles, contact a few candidates and plan one interview...”, then the company had a higher likelihood of purchasing the Sourcer model, indicating its effectiveness in providing potential talent (Sofia Bedonni, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.6. Internal Data on Customer Feedback and Behavior

According to the interviews, the problems with Sourcer, experienced by clients, included “difficulty finding candidates who matched their needs” and a sense that the TieTalent “platform limits their freedom” (Sofia Bedonni, Personal Communication, March 2023). Challenges to purchasing the tool included budget restrictions within client companies. Additionally, some clients had difficulty quickly identifying matches that met their search criteria, although this issue has been resolved with the recent “highlighting of skills”. Though the Sourcer model’s user experience and interface are generally found “fine” by users, but “could definitely be improved” (Sofia Bedonni, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.7. Specific Customer Complaints

Concerns about “out-of-date profiles”, the “accuracy of profiles” and problems with the varying technical expertise of recruiters using the TieTalent platform were common among clients of TieTalent (Gregoire Plaignaud, Personal Communication, March 2023). It was also mentioned that “some clients find it difficult to use the features of the TieTalent platform and navigate through the interface, especially those who lack technical recruiting expertise” (Gregoire Plaignaud, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.8. Customer Insights’ Impact on Product Development

The significance of carefully assessing the feedback's source and distinguishing between “complaints and actual needs” was highlighted (Morio Nakatsuka, Personal Communication, March 2023). Morio stated that improving the talent response rate is one of the changes they were already talking about

as well as the UX design of the Sourcer landing page due to numerous customer complaints regarding these matters (Morio Nakatsuka, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.9. Technical Issues

Xavier noted that clients have encountered issues with email reliability, including delays and “emails not being sent”. Clients have also criticized Sourcer service for having “inaccurate talent alerts, mismatches in the results of talent searches and overall poor UX design” (Xavier Lassiera Pérez, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.10. Success in Finding the Right Candidate Through the Platform and Types of Positions That Are Challenging to Fill

In terms of the ability to find the right candidate through the TieTalent talent pool and platform, Michelle said that although she occasionally needs to visit LinkedIn, she primarily concentrates on the talents that are already on TieTalent (Michelle Aanen, Personal Communication, March 2023). Most of the hires made by clients were with applicants who had already signed up with TieTalent. However, when asked about types of positions that have been particularly challenging to fill using the Sourcer model, Michelle explained that it “can be difficult for some IT or Digital Marketing positions” that call for specialized or rare skills. Positions as “security engineers” and those in less populated areas can be challenging. Additionally, it is more difficult to find candidates who meet all the requirements when “clients list multiple must-have skills” (Michelle Aanen, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.1.11. Internal Issues or Limitations Encountered

For better client education and to build credibility through success stories, Sofia suggested offering educational resources, such as demo videos. She also stresses the value of having “several touchpoints” with potential customers (Sofia Bedonni, Personal Communication, March 2023). Gregoire emphasized the need for more “recent talent profiles, ongoing search algorithm improvement, better candidate response rates, and an expanded onboarding model” (Gregoire Plaignaud, Personal Communication, March 2023).

## 3.2. Adjustments to Strengthen TieTalent's Online Visibility and UX/UI

### 3.2.1. User Satisfaction

According to Gregoire, initially, clients withdrew their subscriptions because they were not fully committed during the one-week onboarding period. The onboarding period was increased to one month in order to address this. Clients were receiving training, “FRI profiles (fresh, ready, and interested candidates)”, and search links. Throughout the month, the Talent Sourcer helps, contacts potential candidates, and works toward a successful outcome by the end. In terms of challenges encountered with the UX and UI of the Sourcer model, Gregoire emphasized how crucial it is for customers to view the Sourcer as a “brand-new tool, that they need to spend some time to learn how to properly utilize” rather than a “1-month trial” (Gregoire Plaignaud, Personal Communication, March 2023).

Gregoire mentioned that customers frequently inquire about “skills and job titles”. He mentioned that some frequently asked queries center on why specific profiles show up in their results or why they aren't getting any results at all. Such problems, he added, might occur when “customers enter irrelevant skills in their search criteria” (Gregoire Plaignaud, Personal Communication, March 2023).

The Front-end developer, Xavier Lassiera Pérez, shared a major problem with the platform's initial version – it “lacked user-friendly features”, which led to an unpleasant user experience such as “error page refreshes when returning from visiting a profile”. Though “changes were made” to address this, such as the “use of tags and the highlighting filters” for search items to improve user comprehension, the development process was slowed down by having to “fix and enhance the user interface (UI) before adding new features” (Xavier Lassiera Pérez, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.2.2. Effectiveness, Usability and Functionality

Michelle identified that the training procedure might not have been sufficient in informing clients about how to use the tool effectively, possibly resulting in a lack of comprehension and engagement (Michelle Aanen, Personal Communication, March 2023). The Client Executive, Sofia Bedonni, brought up a problem with the poorly designed landing page of Sourcer used to onboard clients, lacking customer engagement features and resulting in a more complicated process to “convince potential customers” (Sofia Bedonni, Personal Communication, March 2023). Internal feedback for the improvement of usability or functionality of Sourcer was provided by the Front-end developer, Xavier Lassiera Pérez. He emphasized the need to concentrate on “improving the interview” component because in his opinion it would be of great benefit to businesses. He acknowledged that the interview part's current user experience (UX) was difficult, demanded a steep learning curve, and lacked intuitive usability without explicit guidance. Aiming to compete with other platforms like LinkedIn by centralizing all data and conversations between businesses and talents within the Sourcer system, Xavier also mentioned the potential for chat feature improvements (Xavier Lassiera Pérez, Personal Communication, March 2023).

### 3.2.3. Webpage Analytics

Furthermore, the online visibility of the landing page of TieTalent's Sourcer service was evaluated by looking at the webpage analytics, including page views, form submissions, new contacts and clients and bounce rate for the period January 2022 until December 2022. The analysis revealed that for the course of 12 months, there have been only 195 page views, 6 total form submissions to use Sourcer, 1 new contact and a 56,58% bounce rate. The complete analytics can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

### 3.2.4. Competitive Landscape

Last, but not least, a competitive analysis was used to benchmark the features, UI/UX design, usability, and functionality of TieTalent's Sourcer landing page. The analysis revealed multiple areas for improvement due to the recognized lack of visual appeal, limited use of design elements, visuals and interactive elements and text-heavy layout, lacking branding. The complete competitive analysis can be found in [Appendix 9](#).

### 3.3. Ways of Implementing Best Practices

The conducted literature review revealed some of the best recruitment practices. The importance of artificial intelligence (AI) in the recruitment process is highlighted in the study by Al-Alawi et al. (2021). The authors emphasize the important role AI plays in streamlining and automating a variety of tasks, including interview scheduling, resume parsing, and candidate screening. Organizations can increase efficiency, lessen bias, and improve the overall effectiveness of recruitment by utilizing applicant-tracking systems (Al-Alawi et al., 2021).

Alashmawy and Yazdanifard (2019) point to one of the best practices as investigating the role of marketing in hiring and talent acquisition. The authors stress the importance of strong employer branding and positioning in boosting a company's reputation. Marketing initiatives can influence potential customers' perceptions by showcasing a positive work environment and emphasizing the organization's culture & values (Alashmawy and Yazdanifard, 2019).

In an article, Chungyalpa and T (2016) discuss how hiring procedures are constantly changing and highlight new trends. The authors stress how crucial it is to keep up with these trends in order to remain competitive and draw in the best talent. The study identified several new trends, some of which are the use of social media platforms for hiring, online assessments and employee referrals to boost candidate engagement (Chungyalpa and T, 2016).

Ly-Le (2022) highlights the crucial issue of gender diversity and its effect on the hiring process in their study on hiring for gender diversity in tech. The study highlights the need for organizations to adopt specific strategies to find and hire a more diverse pool of applicants. This entails promoting inclusive job descriptions, encouraging female participation, and overcoming unconscious biases (Ly-Le, 2022).

According to Howells' study from 2021, using customer success stories in marketing is beneficial. These case studies highlight the beneficial effects of a business's goods or services on customers and are effective at drawing in new customers. Utilizing customer success stories in the context of promoting a recruitment service can aid in attracting and retaining clients, developing an employer brand, and setting the company apart from rivals (Howells, 2021). Organizations can develop a compelling story that highlights the advantages of partnering with their team by showcasing actual examples of successful experiences with clients (Howells, 2021).

## 4. Conclusions

### 4.1. Pain Points of TieTalent's Sourcer Service

In answer to Sub Question 1 of this Research Justification, it can be concluded that the main pain points with TieTalent's Sourcer service are as follows:

- Finding the right talent is occasionally challenging, especially for uncommon or niche skills.
- Platform restrictions and user experience issues, such as difficulties navigating the platform.
- A poor mechanism for matching candidates and a low response rate from potential candidates, that leave clients unhappy.
- Technical weaknesses and errors, such as trouble with email reliability and inaccurate talent alerts.
- The absence of a comprehensive marketing strategy and instructional resources.

To enhance the efficiency of the Sourcer service and satisfy client needs, several pain areas must be addressed. Expanding talent search capabilities, boosting the user experience, raising the talent response rate, and resolving technical problems should be the main priorities for TieTalent. Additionally, putting in place a strong marketing plan and offering educational materials will assist establish credibility and increase customer satisfaction. TieTalent can improve the Sourcer service and create better product-market fit by resolving these issues.

### 4.2. Adjustments to Strengthen TieTalent's Online Visibility and UX/UI

According to the results, the following changes can be done to strengthen TieTalent's online visibility and improve the UI and UX of the landing page for the Sourcer service, in answer to Sub Question 2:

- Extend the onboarding period to a month to give clients enough time to grasp and make use of the Sourcer platform.
- Strengthen customer knowledge by addressing common questions and concerns about skills and job descriptions.
- Improve the UX/UI design by eliminating errors, adding tags and highlighting filters, and giving UI upgrades priority.
- Modify the landing page's graphics, design components, and layout.
- Simplify the interviewing part of the process and enhance the chat functionality for a better user interface and centralized data management.
- Boost online visibility with paid advertising, social media interactions, content marketing, and SEO strategies.

These changes are expected to enhance user satisfaction, boost TieTalent's web visibility, and draw more users to the Sourcer service.

### 4.3. Ways of Implementing Best Practices

Last, but not least, through reviewing current literature, a conclusion can be drawn about online recruitment best practices, in answer to Sub Question 3:

- Automate tasks like interview scheduling and candidate screening using artificial intelligence to increase productivity and lessen bias.
- Make a significant investment in marketing and employer branding campaigns to boost reputation and attract top employees.
- Stay current on new trends like social media hiring, online exams, and employee referrals to properly engage prospects.
- Put gender diversity promotion ideas into practice, such as writing inclusive job descriptions and addressing unconscious biases.
- Highlight positive client experiences to draw in new business, strengthen employer branding, and set yourself apart from the competition.

By implementing these best practices, TieTalent may improve its recruiting services and boost its competitiveness.

### 4.4. Best Strategies to Increase the Sales of Sourcer Service

The research into TieTalent's lack of success with its Sourcer service has led to an overall conclusion in answer to the main Research Question "What are the best strategies TieTalent can use to increase the sales of its Sourcer service?"

According to the results of the interviews with TieTalent's team members, TieTalent can boost sales by concentrating on the following areas: improving user experience (UX), increasing talent response rate, fixing technical issues, developing a strong marketing strategy, and providing educational resources to its clients. These steps are intended to resolve the main pain points with TieTalent's Sourcer service.

TieTalent can further focus on extending the onboarding period, offering thorough training, enhancing the Sourcer landing page's design, and improving the interview functionality to handle client commitment issues, improve user engagement, optimize the user experience and consequently increase its online sales.

TieTalent may further enhance its recruiting services and draw in more sales by putting best practices that were found in the literature review into practice. This entails employing artificial intelligence (AI) to automate processes, investing in employer branding and marketing efforts, keeping up with emerging trends, supporting gender diversity, and emphasizing pleasant client experiences.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the research, the following recommendations can be given.

To eliminate pain points with the Sourcer service, TieTalent may perform user research and usability testing to pinpoint problems and enhancement opportunities, then create a roadmap based on the most important pain areas identified for improving the user experience. Furthermore, TieTalent could make more investments in UI and UX design upgrades, putting an emphasis on responsive design, easy-to-use navigation, and streamlined email procedures.

- **Suitability:** With the strategy of conducting user research and usability testing, it is ensured that the suggested improvements are founded on actual user needs and preferences, making them extremely relevant in improving the user experience. Providing an outstanding user experience becomes a key competitive advantage as TieTalent strives to become Europe's top tech recruitment platform. TieTalent can demonstrate its dedication to providing high-quality services and addressing the demands of clients by giving user experience and email procedures improvements a top priority. The Swiss start-up may establish itself as a go-to tech recruitment platform for employers, as users who are happy with the Sourcer service are more likely to stick with it, recommend it to others, and possibly upgrade to higher-tier options. These elements support generating more revenue and are suitable for the TieTalent.
- **Acceptability:** The recommendations are likely to be well received by stakeholders given that they originated following interviews with them. Clients will value the improved experience and a more effective platform, while investors will be satisfied with TieTalent's dedication to ongoing development. Although there are underlying risks, such as technological difficulties, potential financial limitations, and time constraints, these can be reduced with appropriate planning and development iteration. To determine whether the long-term advantages outweigh the initial investment, TieTalent can further develop a cost-benefit analysis. However, a better user experience is anticipated to draw in more customers and produce a profitable return on investment. The recommendation is acceptable overall, with manageable risks.
- **Feasibility:** TieTalent has an IT staff who are knowledgeable about research methodology and can plan and conduct user research studies. As a result, TieTalent's IT team is proficient in interpreting and evaluating the user research data that has been gathered. The front-end developer at TieTalent can transform the results of user research into useful design improvements. He is skilled in developing user-friendly interfaces that are intuitive and emphasize responsive design. The IT staff at TieTalent is also qualified to set up the required technological framework to regularly gather and assess user feedback. TieTalent's Marketing team can create a better email design and IT team can improve email reliability and procedures. The time required may range from a few weeks to a few months, and limitations such as IT and Marketing teams having extra priorities that prevent them from working swiftly on the recommended improvements exist. Although feasible, this recommendation carries some potential limitations.
- **Evaluation:** Metrics like registration completion rates, user retention, and user satisfaction surveys can be used to gauge how well these recommendations are working. Also, ROI tracking monthly generated revenue from sales of Sourcer service.

To improve Sourcer's landing page UI/UX and increase online visibility, TieTalent could modify the visual design, layout, and call-to-action components of the landing page to produce a more

compelling user experience and use paid advertising, content marketing, and social media platforms to raise brand awareness and increase visitors to the Sourcer service.

- **Suitability:** More visitors and better brand awareness are directly influenced improving TieTalent's online visibility. According to the results of the competitive analysis, mentioned above, enhancing the Sourcer landing page's visual design, layout, and call-to-action elements can give TieTalent a competitive edge. The key strength of TieTalent is its knowledge of tech recruitment and by strategically utilizing paid advertising, content marketing, and social media channels, the company may effectively increase traffic and conversion rates and ultimately drive more sales. This suggests that the recommendation is suitable with TieTalent's main goal.
- **Acceptability:** Given that their opinions have been considered and included into the recommended actions, stakeholders are more likely to respond positively. There are several risks associated with paid advertising, content marketing, and social media campaigns intended to promote the Sourcer service. However, by ensuring that the advertising tools are working properly, doing regular performance reviews, and making the necessary modifications, these risks can be reduced. Once again, TieTalent may perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether this recommendation might be profitable. Finally, the business may invest on a social media audit before launching advertisements to find new strategies or ways to improve the current ones. The recommendation is acceptable but needs further risk evaluation.
- **Feasibility:** TieTalent has a team of Marketing professionals who are experts in search engine optimization strategies and can boost the Sourcer service's online visibility. The Marketing team has the web design expertise necessary to change the call-to-action, visual design, and layout of the landing page. Of course, applying marketing strategies and seeing results can take up to a year. Another limitation would be the task prioritizations of TieTalent's Marketing team. Therefore, this recommendation is feasible with the respective time constraints and financial limitations.
- **Evaluation:** Metrics like website traffic, search engine rankings, conversion rates, ROI and user engagement can be used to gauge how well these recommendations are working.

Last, but not least, a big recommendation, as a result of the research into the emerging recruitment best practices, is for TieTalent to start highlighting client success to foster trust, set themselves apart from the competition, and draw top clients. TieTalent could automate time-consuming processes like resume screening and applicant matching by leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms. Though TieTalent already applies some of the best practices mentioned previously, they could further work on supporting diversity programs.

- **Suitability:** TieTalent's financial performance could be improved by taking the recommended actions. Highlighting client success stories can attract more high-value clients, resulting in greater revenue. The company can efficiently handle a greater volume of candidates by automating time-consuming operations, which also lowers expenses. Furthermore, supporting diversity programs can extend the client base while opening new market prospects, thereby contributing to financial success and brand recognition. Therefore, this recommendation is suitable.
- **Acceptability:** Although deploying AI and machine learning algorithms may come with some risks, such as technical difficulties and concerns about data privacy, TieTalent may reduce these risks by using effective implementation tactics and strong data protection mechanisms. The other recommendations could help increase revenue, customer satisfaction, and operational

efficiency, thus the return on investment (ROI) could be positive. These actions fit well with TieTalent's long-term strategy of expanding its recruiting services and market competitiveness, making them acceptable. However, TieTalent should run the necessary cost-benefit analysis before implementation.

- **Feasibility:** Because of their knowledge of AI and machine learning algorithms, TieTalent's IT specialists can automate time-consuming procedures like resume screening and candidate matching, though this may involve some financial limitations and time constraints. With many of its clients, TieTalent has also developed and maintained close partnerships. The open communication strategy and collaboration can make it possible for Marketing and Sales teams to work together to promote customer success stories. Taking part in diversity initiatives can be further researched by the Marketing team to develop a proper strategy. The development can take up to couple of months, but the recommendation is feasible with small limitations.
- **Evaluation:** Metrics like the amount of time saved throughout the hiring process, greater efficiency, better employer brand perception, and client acquisition rates can be used to assess how effective these recommendations were.

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## Appendix 1

### Interview Protocols

#### **Interview questions for Marc Trillou, CEO of TieTalent:**

1. Can you describe the service and its intended purpose?
2. What were the initial expectations for the service's performance in the market?
3. What factors do you think contributed to the service's poor performance over the past year?
4. What steps have you taken to address the issues with the service before my internship has begun?
5. How has the company's leadership responded to the service's poor performance?
6. What kind of data do you have about customer feedback and behavior in relation to the service?
7. Are there any changes to the service's design or marketing strategy that the company was considering to improve its performance?
8. What lessons has the company learned from the service's poor performance, and how will those lessons be applied in the future?
9. Can you provide any insights into the competitive landscape for this service, and how the company is positioning itself against its competitors?
10. How does the company plan to measure the success of its efforts to improve the service's performance going forward?

#### **Interview questions for Morio Nakatsuka, Product Owner at TieTalent:**

1. Can you give me an overview of the service and its features?
2. How long has the service been on the market?
3. What metrics do you use to measure the service's success?
4. Can you share any specific customer complaints or feedback regarding the service?
5. How has the service performed compared to our competitors?
6. What changes have been made to the service since it was first launched?
7. How does the service fit into the company's overall strategy?
8. What steps have been taken to identify the issues with the service's performance?
9. What are the top three issues that have caused the service to underperform?
10. What solutions have been proposed or implemented to address these issues?
11. How will you measure the success of these solutions?
12. What role do customer insights play in shaping the service's development and improvement?
13. Can you walk me through the product roadmap and any upcoming changes or updates?
14. How do you prioritize the service's development and improvement initiatives?
15. What are your plans for the service in the long term?

#### **Interview questions for Michelle Aanen, Talent Sourcer at TieTalent:**

1. Could you describe your typical workflow using the Sourcer service?
2. How successful have you been in finding the right candidates for clients using the Sourcer service over the past months?
3. Are there any particular types of positions that have been particularly challenging to fill using the Sourcer service?

4. What criteria do you use to determine if a candidate is a good match for a given position?
5. How do you handle situations where the Sourcer service is not returning good results or relevant candidates?
6. Have you tried any alternative sourcing methods to supplement or replace the Sourcer service?
7. Are there any particular issues or limitations that you've encountered with the Sourcer service that you think could be improved upon?
8. How have you communicated feedback and suggestions for improvement to the development team working on the Sourcer service?
9. How do you measure the effectiveness of your sourcing efforts and the success of the Sourcer service in meeting client needs?
10. Based on your experience, what changes or improvements do you think would be most helpful for improving the effectiveness of the Sourcer service?

**Interview questions for Gregoire Plaignaud, Senior Talent Sourcer at TieTalent:**

1. How long have you been using the Sourcer service, and what have been your experiences with it so far?
2. Can you tell me more about the clients who have been using the Sourcer service? What types of businesses are they, and what kind of talent are they searching for?
3. Have you noticed any common issues or concerns that clients have had with the Sourcer service? If so, what are they?
4. Can you walk me through the process of using the Sourcer service? What steps do you take, and what challenges have you encountered?
5. How do you typically evaluate the effectiveness of the Sourcer service? What metrics do you use, and how have they been performing over the past year?
6. Have you made any changes to the way you use the Sourcer service over the past year? If so, can you tell me more about them?
7. How do you typically communicate with clients about the Sourcer service? What questions do they ask, and how do you address any concerns they may have?
8. Are there any areas where you think the Sourcer service could be improved? If so, what are they, and how do you think they could be addressed?

**Interview questions for Sofia Bedonni, Client Executive at TieTalent:**

1. Can you describe the specific issues that clients have been experiencing with the Sourcer service over the past year?
2. What feedback have you received from clients about the specific aspects of the Sourcer service that are not working well?
3. Can you provide any examples of situations where the Sourcer service failed to deliver the expected results?
4. Have there been any major changes or updates to the Sourcer service in the past year? If so, how have these changes impacted its performance?
5. Are there any specific industries or types of roles where clients have reported more issues with the Sourcer service? If so, why do you think this is the case?
6. How does TieTalent currently measure the effectiveness of the Sourcer service, and what metrics do you use to track its performance?

7. Have you considered any potential solutions to the issues that clients have been experiencing with the Sourcer service? If so, what approaches have you explored?
8. Are there any particular client needs or pain points that TieTalent is not currently addressing with the Sourcer service? If so, how do you plan to address these in the future?
9. Are there any other tools or technologies that clients are using to supplement or replace the Sourcer service? If so, what are they, and why do you think clients are turning to these alternatives?
10. Looking forward, what are TieTalent's plans for improving the Sourcer service, and how do you plan to ensure that it delivers value to clients in the future?

**Interview questions for Xavier Lassiera Pérez, Frontend Developer at TieTalent:**

1. What are the most common issues or bugs that users have reported in the past months when using the Sourcer service?
2. How does the (*past*) frontend design and interface impact the usability and functionality of the Sourcer service?
3. Have you identified any areas where the Sourcer service can be improved or optimized from a front-end perspective? If so, can you explain how?
4. Are there any specific user scenarios where the Sourcer service is not performing well, and if so, what are they?
5. Have you conducted any user testing or usability studies on the Sourcer service, and if so, what were the results?
6. Are there any performance or scalability issues with the Sourcer service that need to be addressed from a front-end perspective?
7. Can you suggest any new features or improvements to the Sourcer service that could enhance its usability or functionality?
8. How would you prioritize the front-end improvements that need to be made to the Sourcer service, and why?
9. What role do you think the frontend development team can play in improving the overall user experience of TieTalent's Sourcer service?

## Appendix 2

### Interview with Marc Trillou

Raya: Yes, we're recording now. So again, thank you so much. All the questions that I'm going to ask you are focused on Sourcer's performance before I started my internship, so before January. The first one is if you can describe from your point of view the service and its intended purpose. I know that there are two types of services that we provide. So, when you created this one, what was the purpose that you had in mind?

Marc: Specifically, Sourcer?

Raya: Specifically, Sourcer.

Marc: When we go back in time, when we started TieTalent, we started with the on-demand model. So on-demand model is companies that will more or less give us, pay us a fee whenever they hire the right person. When we were doing business development and meeting companies, we came across some prospects that were interested in the value proposition that we have with TieTalent, which means giving them access within a few clicks to the right talents that they need in tech to be successful and manage to utilize their product, etc. But on an internal level, they did not have a budget to pay on-success fees and they were themselves in charge of sourcing talents in other platforms like LinkedIn or Xing for instance. So they could not really externalize their process with an on-demand model. By talking with them, we realized that we could launch a new product that's called Sourcer that would allow them to act kind of like our talent agent, adding access to the platform, being able to do searches on platform, create their opportunities, share talents with their colleagues, etc. and ultimately pay a subscription on a yearly basis and have no additional fee. This would allow them to plan on their cost on a yearly basis and ultimately be able to access those talents that are rare on the market. So, this is how TieTalent idea started for Sourcer, specifically adapting our business model towards this kind of people that need less help from talent agents, are more autonomous and need to be able to budget their sales on a yearly basis.

Raya: So basically on-demand model is more for people who let's say hire once, twice per year and Sourcer would be for people who hire on a bigger base, or this is not the main difference?

Marc: It will be one of the elements but not the only one. So typically, companies that have a lot of hiring to make every year, they have internally people that do talent acquisition, so that do this sourcing job. So Sourcer makes sense for them. But it's not always the case, sometimes those companies still externalize, you know within our clients we have big companies like Dyson or L'Oreal, they have talent acquisition manager that do active sourcing but still they use us for the on-demand for some position where it's complicated for them to source. While companies that have one to two needs a year typically do not have time to source and we use more than on-demand. So yes, in principle because of the organizations that hire a lot typically have within their HR department someone doing active sourcing.

Raya: Okay, perfect. So, what were the initial expectations for the performance of Sourcer in the market?

Marc: It was to have people that use the platform regularly, so at least connecting every week or every two weeks to source talent. It was for us to achieve some kind of success financially speaking. So, to



have monthly recurring revenues, the initial target and still the target because we are not there yet, so 50,000 of monthly recurring revenues which would show that there is a market, it will show a product market fit and it will be the good basis for us to scale up this model across Europe afterwards. So, the initial expectations were to find our product market fit because we had to change quite some elements in terms of who we target, how the product works, what kind of features to develop in order to get this product market fit. But we did not launch Sourcer with expectations, okay within 12 months we need to be there because we knew that it would be exploration in the beginning, and it still is.

Raya: Okay, and it was first launched in 2021 or 2022?

Marc: No, 2022. The official launch date was January 1st, 2022.

Raya: Okay, perfect. So, well, what factors do you think contributed to the service's poor performance over the past year? Was it only the product market fit or not targeting the right people or not enough research done before that or maybe competitors that have similar offerings?

Marc: There was a lot of things that didn't work as planned but as anything in startup. So, among those we need to distinguish several things. And it's funny because it represents all the departments within TieTalent but for active sourcing platforms to really work well you need to have a lot of talents. We launched in Switzerland where we had talent last year but in Germany as well where we had much less talent last year. So, one of the challenges that we encountered in the beginning when companies in Germany typically were testing the platform, it was their feedback saying we don't have enough German talents or enough local talents on the platform. That was one challenge. Second challenge, it will be more linked to the platform not working as expected. So, the matching system not providing the right matches for the companies. Some bugs we got as well that also discouraged companies from continuing. There was not really a QA process or quality assurance process in place entirely back in time to make sure that the features we released are working well, that all of the basic functions of TieTalent are working well for the companies etc. This has been fixed since then, we learned a lot. Today we have Product Owner that is going to test the whole platform as a sourcing company two times a week to make sure everything works well. But back in time we didn't have that. So, I would say talent acquisition was a challenge especially in Germany. Platform not working well and also, we were exploring the product market fit. We changed the operations side many times on how we handle customer success. So, do we have training in the beginning to teach them how to use the platform? Do we proactively send them matches etc. We tested many different models and, in the beginning, it was not the right one. And finally last department on the sales point of view we also changed many things. We changed the pricing several times, we increased the price. We also changed the contract length, how long, one month, three months, twelve months. Today it's only twelve months because we realized that we need commitment of companies on the long term. One month is not enough time to realize success, to get success with acquiring such talents and ultimately hire them. So, we changed many things. But ultimately across all departments.

Raya: Ok, so this also answers my next question which was what steps you have taken to address the issues with the Sourcer model. How has the company's leadership responded to the services performance? Like you, Jo, Steve and let's say Lynn and Flo. Did you have regular meetings to discuss and to test different things? Or it was more like centralized between you and Jo?

Marc: Yeah, so first we were monitoring the performance often on a monthly but mainly on a quarterly basis. But monthly basis as well. And how we answered is to be very agile. So, until you have your product market fit, it's really about finding it. So, you need to find the right formula. Like we have found for on-demand for instance, we have a model that works, we scale it up. So, it was not a crisis situation in the sense that we knew that you don't get product market fit straight away when you launch a product. It might take time. But what you need to have is agility internally. So, we asked for the teams to be agile. I'll give you an example on the sales team. We had a brainstorming session about what kind of product we could launch, what kind of pricing we could get, what kind of pitch we should change as well to get the company more committed to use the platform, etc. Same on the operations. So, we had agility changing the day of the training, changing do we have a feedback call at the end of the trial period or not, etc. So, lots of agility to A-B test what works the best. Same for IT. IT was more about recording feedback from the companies using the software today, what doesn't work well for them. Fixing everything that should work as a top priority and that doesn't work as planned. Then developing new features in order to improve their experience. And finally for marketing, we had to also closely have a look, launch specific campaign for German talent, etc. And today, if you look at it, we managed to, today we are managing to have the same amount roughly of talents based in Germany as in Switzerland. So also finding a way to attract those talents was something we had to do. So how did we concretely manage that? We talked, but not just the top management, we talked with the whole team, the departments that were concerned. What can we do guys to make it work at your scale, at your department? Marketing, how do we attract those talents? Sales, how do we get them more excited? How do we bring more leads? IT, how do we make sure everything works well as planned? And then what kind of features do we need? And operations, how do we make them understand how to search and ultimately commit to what talents they receive for their matches?

Raya: Okay, so there was kind of balance between all teams so we can ensure that everything works. And you already mentioned that some companies said that the platform was not working well, it was not providing the right matches. But have you received any other customer feedback regarding the Sourcer from clients? Or it was really only connected to just the matching system?

Marc: No, many things didn't work. So, it depends on the time frame, but matching system, it was once in a while. The features on search were not working as expected. There was as well some... what else did we get? The talent response rate. So, for instance, you contact a talent, you know our main competitors, maybe we go to it after, but it's going to be the LinkedIn Recruiter. It's going to be the main platform that companies are going to compare us to when they think about using Sourcer. It's not the same thing for On-Demand, we are going to have other competitors, but for Sourcer specifically, talent acquisition manager uses LinkedIn Recruiter. So when they are going to analyze whether to use TieTalent and Sourcer or not, they are going to compare us to the experience they have with an LinkedIn Recruiter. LinkedIn Recruiter for tech talents, when they are contacting them on that platform, recruiters get between 4 to 8 percent, you have different studies, but 4 to 8 percent, that's the range, positive answer rate of the talent. So, which means I'm going to contact 100 talents for my opportunity, on average 4 to 8 of those will get back to me and tell me they are interested in having a conversation with me. One of the things we really need to differentiate to save people time is on this positive answer rate. On tech talents, we target 60 percent, so 10 times higher response rate, so 10 times more time saved. So, this is one of the elements that will be compared by the recruiters. If we provide the same roughly positive answer rate as a LinkedIn Recruiter, when they are using tech talent, they are going to be like, that's the same thing, I don't need it. You need, if you really want to win this competition, because we also compete against a huge name, LinkedIn is Microsoft, everybody knows about it, it's very easy for people



to sell it entirely to their top management to unlock a budget. Tech talent, not everybody, most of the people don't know about us, so we need to have strong arguments for people, entirely, our users, to convince their management to use us. 10 times higher answer rate is a stronger argument.

Raya: Okay, so the response rate is one of the unique value propositions of TieTalent?

Marc: Yeah, and today we are at around 40 percent positive answer rate, which makes us way higher than the LinkedIn Recruiter, but still, we are not at the 60 percent, so we are still fighting to increase that. But back in time, we were not there, we were at LinkedIn, like 10 percent maybe. So, this was a challenge, so on the product point of view, there was a lot of effort put in place in order to increase this. But also, in an operation point of view, we can show the matches that companies have using Sourcer, are people that are open for new opportunities right now, and not people that created an account five years ago, which was really a challenge back in time.

Raya: And, from what I've seen, LinkedIn Recruiter has a lot less filters to target the right person. But for Sourcer, the unique thing about it is that you can really target the person you exactly need, with skills, whether it be technical skills or soft skills.

Marc: Yeah, exactly. So, if we look at our USP compared to a LinkedIn Recruiter, its two main elements. One is going to be the... well, two main elements that make companies save time. The first one is going to be linked to the fact that companies and our users have access to more information about their talents than a LinkedIn Recruiter. Among those, they have access to crucial ones, such as the salary expectations, in terms of minimum and ideal budget package that the talent wants. And this makes them save tremendous time, because you can imagine the time that is lost by recruiters today, contacting talents, having a first interview, asking them for the salary expectation and realizing they are not aligned. This is the time lost that they don't have using TieTalent. The second element is going to be the possibility for them to see, but also search, by the number of years of experience talents have in specific skills, which today you don't have on LinkedIn recruiters. So, I want a Java developer that is experienced, I can indicate on TieTalent, I want five years of experience, at least, developers on Java, and I have access to them on LinkedIn Recruiter and so on. The second main element of the organization is going to be the positive answer rate, where I am going to contact talents that will get back to me, where we target 60%.

Raya: Okay, perfect. So, moving on to the next question. At the end of last year, were there any changes, but you already mentioned that you changed the price and you changed some things about Sourcer across all departments so it can work smoothly. But this question is more to the design or the marketing strategy. Before, like before starting my internship, have you planned something, have you done something, have you done Google Ads or any kind of marketing efforts on this or it was just landing page that was used to send like manually from Client Executive s or?

Marc: Yeah, it was exactly this. It was manual, there was no campaign, there was nothing put in place. We barely communicated on that and until recently we didn't have a page on the platform about Sourcer. It was a landing page, not even on TieTalent, it was a landing page on HubSpot.

Raya: Okay, yeah. So, it was Client Executive s promoting it. Well, so since there was some moment that the product performed bad and except that you learned that the product market takes time and all of this like insights that you found out through this, what are some like one or two lessons that you really

learned from this and lesson that can be applied also in the future and you think you can continue to apply if TieTalent, let's say, decide to develop new services?

Marc: The main lesson is that everything takes more time than what you plan. Like really, you need to count two or three times more than what you originally planned, which is okay, but you need to be aware of that. Main lesson, so maybe better planning or understanding that you cannot have too high expectations for a product launch, especially to find your product market fit. Second lesson that I learned with the launch of Sourcer, I would say that you need to be really involved as a top management into the launch of a product. More than what I thought I should, because ultimately you need to show the way, like what I see right now with Jo being much more involved in the operations, putting process in place, being much more attentive to the client feedback, etc. Then what we had before, this helps us make tremendous progress. So being much more involved, this is a lesson that I learned quickly and that I will also apply for the launch of French market next quarter. Whenever there is something new, this unknown, you cannot just ask people to do it, you need to be there with them much more, being much more involved.

Raya: Okay, and you already mentioned about LinkedIn Recruiter and that is kind of what most people compare it, let's say, TieTalent and so on. But do you think that's the only competition in the market? I mean, do you have any other insights into the competitive landscape for this service? And how is our product positioning itself? What do you think, at least in the markets of Germany and Switzerland?

Marc: No, you have many other competitors. You have substitution products, which means they are not going to do the same thing as us, but they are going to answer the same problems. Typically, job boards or even to some extent agencies, but agencies will more compete with the on-demand model. But job boards could be a competition for people that do not want to actively source and are kind of expecting to receive applications through the job boards. We have good arguments to remove the competition of job boards because tech talents on average, only 20% of them find a job through a job board. Which means companies that only use job boards, they cut themselves from 80% of the tech talents out there. So, it's really a shame. This is a real statistic, and we communicate that to the companies to convince them to access tech talent where we have much more than 20% of the people open to a new opportunity. So, job boards still, lots of companies still use job boards even for tech needs. In terms of marketplaces, LinkedIn is a good sourcing tool. Honeypot in Germany, Talent.io as well in Germany. In Germany, you have also a platform that's called, I don't remember the name, that is quite good actually.

Raya: Yeah, [getinit.de](http://getinit.de)

Marc: Right, exactly. And info, staff info or info, I don't remember, info something. Okay, there are these two, I can find the name later on, that are good, but we have differentiation compared to those. Typically, marketplaces like Honeypot. How do we differentiate? Honeypot only focuses on developers or some kind of developers, maybe data scientists but that's it. We have within TieTalent more than 50 specializations. So, companies can hire much more talent by still us being focused on tech than on Honeypot. Same for Talent.io. Instaffo, that's a good company. But typically, Instaffo focusing on young talents while us are focused in terms of talent is people that have 3 to 10 years of experience. So, we have still our differentiation. I would say that our closest competitor, if we remove all the job boards and LinkedIn Recruiter, would be Lionstep. Lionstep is interesting, it's not only tech, they have recruiters, we have different models. Us, we really have a lot of companies that have no intermediaries, they search, they have access to talent while Lionstep has recruiters in between. But it's an innovative model.

Raya: Well, so bottom line is we position ourselves good against the competitors because we have specific talent that can differentiate.

Marc: So to answer the position, how do we position ourselves compared to the competition is going to depend on which one we are talking about. But typically, Honeypot, we allow them to have more volume of hiring because of all the specializations we are going to provide while being relevant in tech, once again. We also have a high volume of talents that are more local than Honeypot. Honeypot, you need to know that the feedback we got from the companies using them is that most of their talents are based very far away, like India, etc. While again, the feedback that we got back in time when we launched was, we want local talents. Today, we have much more local talents. So, we have this positioning of fresh and local talents that Honeypot typically has less than us, just from the feedback we got.

Raya: And last question of the interview. So, let's say Sourcer now is having a really good improvement and is going to eventually work well. How do you plan to measure the success of your efforts to improve the service performance going forward? Are there key performance indicators for you? Is it like on how many companies we managed to onboard?

Marc: There are several. There are really actually quite some. But one of the main ones, you know, it's good to launch a product, but ultimately, one of the ways to measure success is how many companies are going to use it and pay for it. Not just use it for free, pay for it. Because paying is something that requires commitment from companies. We asked them also, you know, it's a SaaS system. It's a really complicated SaaS because when you ask people to pay in advance, they pay one month. They pay one year in advance. They pay for the next 12 months. It's a lot to ask. So having enough companies, 50k more recurring revenues is a good start for us to get in the coming month. By the end of the year, it would be nice. It would be a target. Arriving there shows that we are able to convince, we have a product market fit, we are able to convince enough companies to commit enough towards us. So, revenues target, this is one of the metrics that we will follow. But not only. We want to really provide value to those companies. So typically looking at how many searches they make, the usage of the platform. How many searches, how many hires they are able to get through the use of the service is going to be very important metrics. And of course, something that we already have in place, but we will keep developing is to understand their experience with the product itself and with the service that we are providing. So, to do that, we have NPS score, so Net Promoter Score that we are sending to the companies for the usage. To understand how satisfied they are with the quality of the talents they have on the platform, with the search, with the service in general. So, all of that, if I had to choose three main, the adoption, that translates with more recurring revenues, the revenues we generate. The usage, after paying for it, are they really going to use it? If yes and they use it regularly, this is a sign for me that we provide value, especially if they hire people. And finally, their opinion, typically with NPS score. But also with interviews, I jump often, once in a while, to calls with clients in Germany, Switzerland, to understand their usage, to understand what we could do better and to understand how satisfied they are.

Raya: Ok, this is the end of our interview. Thank you so much. I stop the recording now.

## Appendix 3

### Interview with Morio Nakatsuka

Raya: So, from like a product owner point of view, can you give me an overview of the service and how the source service and its features?

Morio: It has two aspects of course it is I mean it's a B2B to C platform so called. So, it is a marketplace for a talent who are looking for jobs and companies who want to hire the talent. And yeah. And for a Sourcer specifically? Yeah, it has been it has been you know, traditionally job looking job hunting how do you say the job market job market let's say has been traditionally dominated by job boards. But we are focused on the talents with the technical skills and as nowadays globally the talents with the tech skills especially developing skills, they are at the short globally so that nobody applies anymore nobody uses a job board because they don't have to apply anymore. And our concept the Sourcer concept is that you don't have to apply you just need to register and the companies will apply to you.

Raya: But from the talent side? This is from the talent side, right?

Morio: Yeah, from the talent side.

Raya: From company side?

Morio: From the company side you can it is a basic recruitment platform like a CV search platform that you can search the talents profiles with several different search criteria such as specializations like what kind of developers you want the keywords the skills and we have database of the skills we store which talents have what kind of skills and of course language and locations so by combining these criteria you can search the talents and directly contact. So, once you find the talent you are free to contact them and we assist the setting of the interviews with the talents.

Raya: Okay, and I had a conversation with Marc as well. So, he told me that the Sourcer specifically has been on the market since 2022. Correct?

Morio: Since like January 2022. Correct. Okay, so I was not there though.

Raya: What?

Morio: I was not there.

Raya: Yes. So, after you became part of the TieTalent team, what metrics do you usually use to measure the Sourcer service success or consequently not success? What are some KPIs for you?

Morio: As a business, as a company, of course, we need to generate the revenue to keep on. But okay, the question is that how we generate revenue, and we receive revenue as a return of the value we provide. Now, what is the value? Ultimately, it's hiring, placement, so-called. But as a social platform, how can I say? Well, hiring is heavily dependent on the process of the companies because there are so many factors in hiring that we cannot control. So, at this moment, not at this moment, sorry, in January 2023, we started targeting interviews. So, maximizing the specific amount of certain amount of interviews for every customer was the key metric, the key indicator of delivering the values.

Raya: Yeah. Okay, thank you. So, like we all know that Sourcer has not been performing really well throughout the past year. So, do you have any specific customer complaints or feedback as a product owner regarding the Sourcer and can you share it if you have such?

Morio: So many. Well, choose top three, like the most common, most recurring one. Talents are not up to date.

Raya: What does this mean?

Morio: We have been running the business. I mean, not we because I was not there, but the talent has been running the business for four years and a lot of the profilers are old.

Raya: Yeah.

Morio: And unlike LinkedIn, we don't have contents for talents because, you know, it is like it's a reverse of job postings. So, you post your CV, and the companies apply. So, unless somebody applies to you, you don't have any reason to visit our platform. So, you know, if nobody applies, then your information becomes old in our platform. And now so many talents are in that status. So when company contacts them, when our clients, customers contact them, it is totally like normal that it happens that sometimes that customers find that the information in our platform is old or, you know, somebody who said that I am looking for a job in our platform actually now is not looking for a job anymore because he or she just got a new job three months ago and we don't know that in our platform. We don't have that info. This is one of the top three complaints.

Raya: Yeah. Okay. So, it just basically results in like a mismatch between what the company is looking for and what we can provide.

Morio: Exactly. Due to the time. Like a time matter.

Raya: Yes. Okay.

Morio: Yeah. And one more thing I can mention about the complaint is that, of course, the search accuracy. Yeah. That many customers, many companies, especially in 2020, was complaining that the search does not work as they wish to. They saw a lot of profilers, for example, one profile repeatedly everywhere. It was like giving a big noise in the search results or many filters were not working. Yeah. But I'm not sure if this is related to your marketing thing because it was purely a product engineering issue and we have improved a lot.

Raya: No, definitely. It is related to the thesis as a whole because at the end, I need to make recommendations and the better overview I have, regardless the fact that I focus only on marketing. Of course, in marketing, I can provide like exact final product because I can do it myself. But also, there is this part about recommendations, about what the company can do to further improve. So, yes, it's absolutely relevant. Thank you.

Morio: Okay.

Raya: Okay. So, moving forward. How has the Sourcer service performed compared to our competitors? Do you have any kind of data like that?

Morio: I mean, it is difficult to compare exactly to our competitors, for example.

Raya: Okay.

Morio: The biggest competitor we have is LinkedIn. Yeah.

Raya: And how has the service performed compared to our competitors?

Morio: We have performed. What exactly do you want to know from this question?

Raya: Well, basically, yeah, I want to ask you if you have evaluated how other similar services like this one, like LinkedIn Recruiter, this is something that Marc mentioned about LinkedIn Recruiter, basically, how has it performed taking into consideration that we are a startup, we have launched the service one year ago only. And we are still like doing a lot of effort and like across all departments to make it work. My question is, in your opinion, how has it performed compared to competitors? You can say like it could have been worse. It could have been a lot better. We struggled with this and this and this or we did our best and at this moment, there is nothing else we can do. So, that's what I want to derive from this question. And I have 10 more questions. So, we are going to go deep.

Morio: Well, I still am not sure if you are mentioning about our effort or our value. But if I talk about the value that, okay, we have one of the greatest databases of the talent in Switzerland. And the only enemy that we cannot easily beat in Switzerland is LinkedIn. But we also have a clear advantage compared to LinkedIn, that is that we provide a direct contact to the talents. So, seeing from a customer's point of view, company's point of view, that we provide direct contact to the customers, direct contact of the talents to the customers, and that we possess the salary expectation of every talent that LinkedIn does not have. And for the talent side, that every contact that they will receive from our platform is more relevant compared to LinkedIn because we do not allow massive mass campaign. And also, we are focusing on the job hunting, sorry, the recruitment, while in LinkedIn you receive so many irrelevant messages.

Raya: Okay, understood.

Morio: If you are talking about the effort that we are, we need to, we need to pay more attention to who is the very core target of our service or our product, okay, who we really want to satisfy. And, yeah, in other words, the persona, yeah, and sharpen up product to make sure that we can 100% satisfy these personas, you know, the very narrow specific persona when they come to use our platform. That's the very basic theory of product development and, yeah, that's where, that's what we should be paying more effort, I think. Okay, that's a good note, good insight.

Raya: And, okay, so, since you are in charge of the product management, since you have started at TieTalent and since you have worked with Sourcer for the first time, what changes did you make after this, like, when did you start in May or April?

Morio: No, July, right before you.

Raya: Ah, July, okay.

Morio: We joined almost same time, yeah.

Raya: Yeah, okay, so, going back to July, what were the first changes that you made to Sourcer?

Morio: One, data tracking, because we did not have data, yeah, and this is what happens quite often when a company builds a product without a product manager, product owner, right, because our approach, the very common approach of product ownership, product managers, we define the metrics, like you asked, you know, we define the value and we define the metrics that represents the value, and we design the, every journey, customer journey, to access that value. So, this, like, so, for example, you know, you log in, you search, you view profile, you contact, you get interview, right? If this is one path, right, to achieve that ultimate value we want to deliver, we set milestone here and the track all the steps, you know, this is how we build a product. So, from the beginning, we make sure that if there is two paths to access the value, they are measured, so that we can give analysis later. This was absent. So, I, and today it's not perfect yet, but I think this sense to analyze the data by measuring the steps was one of the things that I urgently did in the first several months. Another thing is to analyze the customer types like personas, you know, I was not clear who was, who has been targeted, who we have, we were targeting. And so, I started looking at individual customers on the LinkedIn profiles and their positions like research on every single customer to understand what kind of customer can be happy with our product and what kind of customer cannot be. Because at that moment, there was no clear definition of who we should be targeting. That's another thing I spent.

Raya: So, it's a bit, it was a bit like in the blind.

Morio: Exactly, yeah. And when I joined, Marc, Stevens and I agreed that the first improvement should be the search because at that moment, indeed, the search was not working. So, my one first goal was that of mine was to increase the profile view that occur from the search because at that moment, we had even less than one, like 0.6 or so unique profile views out of one search. It means that you search once and you don't open no profile, you know. Yeah, and also, even if you open profile, there were so many cases that clients were viewing the same talents, you know, majority of the profile views were same talents, actually. If you want the data, I can go to the data later. So, those two metrics I wanted to improve and we improved like three times better.

Raya: Yeah, that's pretty impressive.

Morio: Well, it's still low. It is still low, but we have improved. Yeah. Okay. One last thing that I started working on right after joining. In my theory that the product, like in the new small product like ours before product market fit, we needed to have one, at least one excellent value that works better than competitors, okay, like a super edgy one. But we also have to cover other parts meeting the market standard. So, often startup product makes mistake like they have a great value, but they care too little about other parts that, you know, it looks really bad, for example. Okay, the UI is too messy, for example. Okay. And still, if you learn to use the product, because of this one excellent part that you can have the value out of the product, but the users do not pay effort to learn the product. Instead, they start criticizing the product because of this UI mess that is not meeting the market standard. I have seen these cases many times in my career. So, in my theory, we have to be meeting the market standard at least in every area. Why do we have one excellency? We had too many parts lower than market

standard when I started. And I also wanted to cover all of those holes. Like we patched up all those folders just to make sure that they meet to the market standard.

Raya: So, well, I don't know if I should ask this question, but like in your opinion, how does the service fit into the company's overall strategy? And for me, it's like just to understand if from product owner point of view, we have just On-demand model. And basically, the Sourcer model is created to target completely, well, to some extent, different group of recruiters and companies than is the On-demand. So basically, the Sourcer, does the Sourcer fit into the overall strategy because it adds another value and like another point of revenue?

Morio: Absolutely. I mean, we want to grow big. We want to be number one in Europe and agency, it is really difficult nowadays to be the giant if we stay as an agency. Agency has its own value. And personally, I love human touch, you know, like agency is a great thing. But if we want to be number one in Europe as a scale, then we need to be SaaS as well. Right? Because while in agency, human effort is the formula is very like, you know, dependent on the growth is dependent on the amount of the human work. So, you know, to grow, you have to hire as many people. But if SaaS, the software is what works. So, you know, one software can satisfy a million people. So, it definitely fits the company's overall strategy. And it also makes sense because we have internal recruiters doing a job for on demand customers. But out there, there are so many similar people, right? Like recruiters, so-called recruiters, who are exactly like our own recruiters. And if our own recruiters can access value using our platform, then we can sell it to the external recruiters and let them access to this value. So, it makes sense.

Raya: Yeah. Okay. You are a product owner, like, you know, that a service is not working. So, what how you start to approach this whole thing? Like, did you make brainstorming sessions with the whole team? Meetings with sales operations, IT to better understand or like, OK, I know that you have sprint runs. So maybe that's some part of it.

Morio: OK, OK. The first the very first thing that I started related to this is that, OK, first one month or even three months, actually, I focused on listening to people internally. I love meeting users. I love meeting customers. I love checking competitors, but I didn't do them. I just focused on listening to every colleague that I think it was like 20 or less at the time. Yeah. And I interviewed everyone at the beginning and also met regularly some key players and they collected all the pain points that they were experiencing at the moment. And I documented all of the points in my notion. Every single point. Yeah. I was expecting that I will have 50 pain points from everyone. I ended up with 200 and I stopped counting after 200.

Raya: So, yeah, you ended up with 200 pain points from each person?

Morio: No, no, no. But I was expecting that the items will slow down when I passed 50 and no, it grew, grew, grew, grew, grew, different items, different items, different items until 250 or something like that. And so, I spent three goddamn months to listen to all of that in order to understand where the product is exactly and what's the issues and what I should prioritize. Yeah. That was investment. And why I did it, because I have experience in recruitment SaaS business. But after all, you know, people who have been working here know about the users, know about the customers, know about internal problems that firstly I really wanted to collect all the, I wanted to copy their brains like completely.

Raya: Yeah.

Morio: And so that I have their brains. Then I started seeing external point of view assessment.

Raya: All right. Yep, that makes sense. So, yes, the next question is, I think we already kind of discussed this, but top three issues that have caused the service to underperform. So I remember you told me that there was a mismatch, you know, between the talent, some profiles that were outdated, and basically that the search and the keywords and so on were not working well. But I guess, yeah, also other things we mentioned that there was no exact like target group or research done before, or pain points identified. So, are these kinds of the issues that are like contributed to the underperformance? So, you want to add something else?

Morio: I'm not clear with that question, sorry.

Raya: Okay, so basically, I don't think that the expectations for Sourcer were to underperform initially. So, you know, if there were, you told me that, well, for the company's side, there were like complaints that profiles are outdated. Talents were not looking for a job. So yes, I'm just asking you for, if you want to add something more to that issues that we have already discussed, that maybe are, yeah, I don't know, more important.

Morio: More important than that was contributing to the dissatisfaction of the customers, you mean?

Raya: Yes.

Morio: Product-wise? Hmm. Yeah, talents were not, okay, well, the thing is that, you know, the value is interview, right? Delivering the interview is the value of this platform. Now you start with the search, search had a lot of issues. The profilers were good. The profilers were clean, qualified, good. We had the CVs, a lot of good information, but when all the Sourcer customers were contacting inside of our platform, it was not working at all. We had only less than 19% of response rate when our Sourcer customers were contacting to the talents in using our chat system. Horrible number, you know?

Raya: Yeah.

Morio: So, out of five you contact are ignoring you, who is going to use this platform? So that was, but this was not like the biggest pain point. Why? Because people were anyways contacting the talents outside of our platform.

Raya: Yeah.

Morio: But if we think about the long-term growth or scaling of the product, we needed to measure that communication. We needed to measure how many communications are happening, how many interviews are happening. Otherwise, as I said, the value is the interview, so interview is the value, but we are not measuring this value, like how many values we are delivering. We cannot measure that without tracking this. So yeah, ultimately this was a heavy problem, and we are solving.

Raya: Yeah. Okay.

Morio: It used to be 18.8%, now it's 54% the response rate.

Raya: Amazing. Well, we talked about a lot of things already, so that's why I think we already discussed what solutions have been proposed to address these issues. We also talked about some KPIs, like how do you measure the success of the solution. So yes, what role do customer insights play in shaping the product's development and improvement?

Morio: What do you mean by insights?

Raya: Feedback, customer feedback.

Morio: Customer feedback is a very- Or just like if someone shares with you like, okay, this is not working. We need it fixed, so we are going to stop our contract because this is just not okay. Yeah, okay. There is a theory of product development, product management, that the B2B product is more about listening to customer's feedback. We serve to the customers, we build what they say. B2C product is more about showing great concept, more than listening to what they say, but we present like, hey, this is the fucking cool thing about our product, use it. And B2B to B2C is extremely difficult in terms of this because for the customer side, the company side, we are supposed to listen to them more, and for the talent side, we are supposed to throw the cool concept that they get attracted. So, we have to balance, but I'm talking about- If I talk about the companies, yeah, the insights are important, but we have to be careful who are saying this because if we want to- If we start following everyone who complain, then product direction can be completely a mess. Like if somebody did not buy a water because this person was not thirsty, that does not mean- And he or she said, I didn't like the label, I didn't like the bottle shape. Are we going to change the bottle? No, because anyways, what he or she was saying is irrelevant. But so, we have to be careful who are saying that. And also when they are saying something, what they say does not mean what they need. They complain. I mean, people love to mention the solution. They want to throw solutions before realizing their problems. If we look at their problems, the solutions can be completely different from what they say. So, the product management job is to listen to their problems, not to their solutions. And that's the role and what I need to pay attention to about customer insights.

Raya: Okay.

Morio: Feedback is useful, but with a lot of care.

Raya: Feedback is useful. Okay, that's a good quote. I'm going to note it. So, what kind of changes or update you are already discussing to implement for Sourcer?

Morio: Yeah, I was seeing a very, very low rate of responses from the customer, from the talent. Sorry. And yeah, I said that, hey, let's focus on increasing the response rate of the talents. And we even put it as a key result of the objective. OKR. And the roadmap, yeah, there are many aspects of this, but you know, like, we started working on two things. One, I started the data analysis. Who is more responsible and who are not responsive? I figured out some segmentation of the users, I mean, sorry, the talents, who reply more and who reply less. So, I started tagging those groups who were showing a high response rate, so that the customers will contact them as priority. Another thing was that problem was that our email notification, email communication to inform the talent side that, hey, you have a company contacting you was very weak, like very weak. So at least, you know, we wanted to meet the

market standard here. So, I copied from LinkedIn and other products to show more attractive, you know, notification for the talents. Okay. But many other, many other, but I cannot mention everything.

Raya: But of course. Okay. Let's say, yeah, my basic question is, how do you prioritize the development and improvement initiative of Sourcer? I don't know if you hear me well, because there is a lot of noise around me. I hear you. But is it more like, is it only platform-wise or is- I don't even know, like, if this- how to even ask you about this. But yeah.

Morio: Good question, indeed. There are many ways to prioritize, yeah, by start with defining the value, what the value we want to provide. Once again, interview. Interview is what we want to provide. Then I break down what is stopping us from maximizing the interviews for our clients. I break down the issues. Why? Typically, I use a funnel, funnel analysis, you know, from the beginning to delivering the interview, there are steps. Normally, there is one constraint. You know, the theory of a constraint is that there is only one constraint at a time, you know, because water flows as much as the biggest constraint defines. So other constraint doesn't matter. I follow this theory, one constraint at a time. What is stopping? What's the biggest constraint now that is preventing the water flow to arrive at the value? And so, I size the problem to the value. There is a value that we want to achieve. There is the problem and I size it and I define the solution, possible solution for that. And then I size the solution, right? Because after all, everything is a return of investment, right? So, there are, let's say that there are three solutions to increase the response rate of the talents. Now, first solution has, you can expect 100 improvement, but it costs 100 development. The second solution can expect 50, but it costs only five development. You do second one, of course. As ROI wise. So that's how I decided the priority.

Raya: Okay.

Morio: But one more thing, this was how I decided the priority when I was younger. Yeah, like a mathematic, you know, logical. One more thing that I realized after experience is listen to people and agree on like, build a consensus with the stakeholders. Like, you know, everyone is a stakeholder. Not only Marc and Jovana, but Steevens and everyone, right? Because sometimes what the people are stressed about can be, can be the constraint. Even if it is not, how can I say, like logically linked to what the platform is suffering. Internal emotion can be like a trust or emotion or like encouragement. This also matters a lot. So, yeah, if, if many people say this is the problem, sometimes I prioritize it, even if it's not a logical explanation. Like I try to make them align, of course, as much as possible. And even if there is one thing that I personally think is logically linked to the platform, is logical. If other people are strongly against the idea, I will not execute it. Like I will not push it.

Raya: Okay. Yeah. I mean, of course, you should have, you should follow your theory and your logic, but sometimes like the team needs you. So, yeah, I understand the team needs you to fix something or to prioritize something. So, okay. Last question. What how do you see like the Sourcer developing in the future? What are your plans for Sourcer in the long term? Do you think it's going to be like really Europe's number one Sourcing tool?

Morio: Europe's number one is a result. It's not a plan. It's a result, right? It's a result that follows, no?

Raya: True, true, true. I'm sorry. Excuse my language.

Morio: I'm not correcting you. I am explaining that how I see it.

Raya: Yeah.

Morio: So we want that result, but we need a plan to achieve it. And I have, I don't have clear plans and my plan, like my personal plan does not really matter because we need a long as the organization. Right. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Raya: But as a product owner?

Morio: As a product owner, my idea of the plans, my ideas for the plan is TieTalent becoming the happiest place for talents. For the platform as a whole, but for Sourcer as well. For Sourcer as well, because after all the best place for the company is the best place for the talents. I mean, the companies follow talents. Companies will come to where talents are. Companies will come to where they can hire talents, you know. If you want to satisfy companies, after all, what matters is the talents. Our product is talent, right? What do we sell is talent. So, what we have to care is supplying the greatest talents. How do we do that? We have to satisfy talents. That's the most important point. Like if you, so for example, if it's a dating app, right? Like we saw, eHarmony charges men and it's free for women. Why? Because those guys will come to marry those women. And for guys, they pay. They fucking pay. If there is no female profiles or, well, yeah, I mean, I'm talking only about the heterosexual cases, but in eHarmony, what is, how they see it is that they're having female profiles is how to satisfy heteroguys. That are the revenue sources, right? The same thing. If we want to charge, if we want to gain revenue from the companies, we need a product that they love equals to talents. So, we need to be the greatest place for the talents. That's one of the, yeah. And how do we do that? Many ideas. Yeah. But anyways, we need to start serving the talents. That's one thing. Another idea for the future plans in the long term is that I'm afraid that the sourcing is going to be very soon dominated by big players. LinkedIn, Google, those giants.

Raya: Why?

Morio: Because obviously the personal information are being connected, being shared. If you go to Manfred, you can connect, you can, I mean, you control the Manfred, your talent profile in Manfred, like 10 platforms are connected to the Manfred and your information are shared to 10 platforms. You know? So, well, actually, if you Google, if I Google your name, I find your LinkedIn, you know? Like it's so easy to find the people because, yeah, why not? I haven't tried your name, but for sure, because I Google people's name and I can find it.

Raya: Yes, my God, I found a lot of things. I have my Twitter, my LinkedIn.

Morio: Of course, of fucking course. What do you think? Didn't you know that?

Raya: Of course. No, of course not.

Morio: Why not?

Raya: Of course, I didn't know that. But well.

Morio: So, yeah, like finding people is going to be very easy and automated and dominated, probably dominated by those big players.

Raya: Yeah.

Morio: Then smaller players like us, can we fight in that the same field? It's going to be difficult. But when we look at the recruitment process, sourcing is only the first step. After finding profiles, the next step is screening it, like assessing if this profile matches to our skill set, our culture, you know, predicting that if this profile, this person will perform well and stay longer and be happy after being hired. Who is doing that? Still, it's a human process. It's a manual process. Who is good at it? Our operation team, you know, our TA team does a good job. So, applying that, if we can apply that operation team's skill to the product and half automate it and scale it, maybe that's where we should fight. You know, and if we are that we don't need to source. Any company who already has 100 potential talents can come to us, submit these profiles to us and we can assess who is the best one to hire. For example. That's another idea.

Raya: Sorry, I was saying, OK, but we talked a lot. This is a lot of information. I'm so glad I recorded everything so I can read it after and then put the pieces in my head. I stop the recording.

## Appendix 4

### Interview with Michelle Aanen

Raya: So, my first question is, you as a Talent Sourcer, can you describe your typical workflow using the Sourcer model? And like a Sourcer, if you can include from start to finish, what is the beginning of your work? Is it when a company is onboarded or when there is a job offer or how does it work?

Michelle: So, it starts when Lynn, the Client Executive, sends me a snippet with all the information of a new company. And here, the next step for me is to schedule two meetings with the new client. A kickoff meeting where I explain to them how the next two weeks of the trial period are going to look like. And Q&A session after a week, more or less, or four or three days, where they can ask questions if they have any, and I can give them some support specific to their questions. What I do then is in the snippet, the Client Executive sends me, I also have the information for the jobs, and which are the prior. So, I already start to pre-select some candidates and I start to do some LinkedIn search if I see that we don't have many. And then I have the meeting with the client, with the new client, the kickoff meeting. And here, I explain to them everything, how the sprint, we call it a four-week sprint, is going to look like. They have a trial period of two weeks. And the first week is just for me to support them, to understand their needs. And here, we choose one position that is of their priority that I will support them with. They can look for as many positions as they want, but I just support them with one position. And for this position, I basically do the recruitment. So, I look on TieTalent, if we have the profiles, I pre-select them, I call them, I brief them, I see if they're interested in the position, if everything matches, like salary expectations, etc. And I also always open a job description on LinkedIn, so new candidates can come in, and I also select some candidates on LinkedIn Recruiter. And then we have the Q&A session after a few days. So, before the Q&A, I have sent some profiles they can review. And then we have the Q&A, where I ask if they like the profiles, if they don't, why not, how they find it hard to search themselves, and if they have any specific needs, I need to help them with in the search. So, I show them a bit how they can improve their search practices. And then it continues, the sprint continues, so they have more time to look for profiles. And I also send one or two new profiles. And then we hope that they sign up.

Raya: Sorry, I interrupted you. But I have just one small question. It has always been like that, with the two weeks free trial, the sprint, and...

Michelle: No, no, no. You want to know how it was before? Then, different. It was different, so, okay.

Raya: Okay. What were the main differences?

Michelle: We still get, I get the snippet from Lynn, where it explains everything. Then we have multiple positions. I start to look for candidates. We have a training call with them, where I show them how to use TieTalent, how to use all the search filters, how to find the best talents. And then I mini shoot some candidates. Here, I just, I don't call them. I just make sure they're still open for new opportunities and match the position. I send it to them, and the client is then in charge of contacting them, briefing them, seeing if they match. And this would be a one-week trial period. At the end, so five days. At the end of the five days, we would see their experience. If they didn't have enough time to search, we sometimes extend. But if they were just not convinced from the platform, we stopped the trial there.

Raya: Okay. And how successful you have been in finding the right candidates for clients using, basically, well, I wrote our Sourcer model over the past, but not even past year, past couple months. But yeah, basically, the TieTalent sourcing platform, I guess that's how we can call it.

Michelle: Yeah. So no, like, no LinkedIn, you mean just on TieTalent?

Raya: Well, do you, as a Talent Sourcer, have a specific, like, platform that is for Sourcer and specific platform that's for On-demand, or you use the same always?

Michelle: Yeah, we use the same.

Raya: Okay. Wow. So then how successful you are using the platform, finding the right candidates? Like you said that sometimes you need to go to LinkedIn, but did this happen often?

Michelle: Yeah. A bit, yes. But we would focus more on the talents we have on the platform. And how should I answer with how successful, like?

Raya: I mean, well, I think you answered well, basically, focus more on the talents that we already have rather than going to LinkedIn or other.

Michelle: Like, yeah, sometimes I would also go to LinkedIn, but usually on just on the platform.

Raya: Yeah. So, for the, like, placements that you have already made, can you say like 90% of them were already on TieTalent? Like registered as talents looking for jobs?

Michelle: Yeah, most of the people I shot, so I sent to the candidates, most of them were already on TieTalent, not all, but quite a bit.

Raya: Yeah. Okay. And, okay, so have you experienced like any particular type of positions like in IT or Digital Marketing that have been really challenging to fill using the Sourcer model and this type?

Michelle: Yeah, so it's usually positions that have very specific skills that are rare, because when a new client comes, they usually give us their hardest position. Often security engineer positions are tricky, or just in general, when the location of the office is in a very unpopular place in Switzerland, it can be difficult or Germany.

Raya: So, what are some rare or specific skills? Like, do you have on top of your mind?

Michelle: Yeah, maybe just security positions are usually a bit tricky. And then some skills, it's maybe when they ask, so I always ask what are your skills that are 100% needed, like a must have, and then you have some clients that are realistic and name one or two. And then I have other clients who maybe they just opened a position, so they don't know how the market is. And then they name me five or six skills that they must have. And in these cases, it's very difficult to find someone who fulfills everything.

Raya: Yeah, well, yeah, makes sense. I didn't know that. What criteria do you use to determine if a candidate is a good match for a given position? Is it only like for skills and qualifications? Or you have some kind of like, I don't know, introductory call that you ask him or her in what kind of environment you want to work or like, what is basically your criteria?

Michelle: So first of all, it has to be, they need to speak the same language, they need to be living in the city of the office or open to relocate or work remote if possible. And if this matches, then salary expectations are very important. Like it's okay if it deviates a little bit, usually we can negotiate, but if it's completely like 50k difference, then it's a no go. So, this is something I always need to check. Of course, EU, like they have a permit to work in Germany. Then I go, I ask, of course, if they have the right skills. So I check how many years of experience they have with the needed skills and if it matches what the position is asking for.

Raya: Okay. And how do you handle situations where, let's say a client has already, well, not purchased, but doing this kind of trial with yourself and it's just not returning good results or relevant candidates. Is it more like that you contact IT, or you try to resolve it yourself and to suit like the situation or what's your approach?

Michelle: So, when they don't find anything on the platform, you mean when they don't see any good talents?

Raya: When they don't see good or relevant talents.

Michelle: Yeah. So, what I usually do is I send them a search link of how I would do the search to find the good talents. So, because since it's a new tool, maybe after the training they don't really understand it that well yet. And then I send some recommendation searches where I know good talents will appear. Other than that, maybe I do a Waalaxy campaign if I also see there's nothing on TieTalent to bring a new talent. Or if they have like a specific need, for example, they are like, I don't find any talents because I'm not allowed to put position as mandatory, for example, then I would go to IT and tell them a specific feature. This is the client is asking for, which really helps them in their search. And then we see with IT if we can make an improvement.

Raya: Okay. And you already mentioned that you sometimes LinkedIn and Waalaxy like us to bring more people or as alternative sourcing methods. But do you have you tried any other or these are the main tool that you use to supplement or replace, you know, our Sourcer?

Michelle: These are, yeah, these are the main tools.

Raya: Okay. And for you, from your point of view, as a Talent Sourcer, are there any particular issues or limitations that you have encountered with the Sourcer model that you think it could be improved upon? For example, not only with the platform, but with the presentation.

Michelle: So, I think just doing the training maybe didn't allow the clients to fully understand how to use the tool because it would just be me talking mostly and maybe they zone out. And so, the training could have been improved. And also, the mini shoot model, I would not call the candidates. So, we didn't know if they would be interested in the position, but we still send it to the company and then the company would contact and there would be a possibility that they don't answer, they're not interested. That was also not good. And then that we didn't do Waalaxy campaigns for all of their positions. And on demand, for example, we always do a Waalaxy campaign because we need to bring in new talents. I always do a Waalaxy campaign. So, I think we should have done the same for Sourcer clients.

Raya: Just to clear something out, can you give me like a brief explanation of the mini shoot model? Because I don't really understand it well.

Michelle: Yeah. So, we have the shoot and the mini shoot. In the shoot, I will call the candidate. I will check everything, their salary expectations, if they're willing to relocate all the skills they have and if they're interested in a particular position and company. If everything is fine, then I shoot the candidates. For the mini shoot, I don't do this call. I just check if they have registered within last year. So, within a year. And if not, then I will call them. But all I ask is if they're still open for new job opportunities. And then I send it to the candidate. If I see from the CV that the skills match, I don't ask, I don't present the company. So yeah.

Raya: Okay. And have you already communicated some feedback or suggestions for improvement to the development team? But I mean, like IT, Product? Have you already? Like, how do you communicate this to them? Do you have like weekly meetings? Or you do it more?

Michelle: Since most of the IT team is remote, we have a channel on Slack. So, if I would see, I would write it in Slack. Usually, sometimes we would have meetings with Morio mostly. And then I would communicate any points of improvements that could be implemented.

Raya: Okay. A bit hard question, at least also for me, but for you more. Is there any way and if yes, how, do you measure the effectiveness of your sourcing efforts, basically on TieTalent and the success of the sourcing model in meeting the client needs?

Michelle: It's a really complicated question.

Raya: I'm sorry.

Michelle: No, it's just for me to understand. So, if there's a way to measure if my efforts lead to success? Is that the question?

Raya: Exactly. For example, like if it could be a company that you shot, you know, a talent that you shot for a company that you onboarded and then the company retaining the talent, maybe something like this. But yes.

Michelle: Yeah, that would be it. So yeah, if I shoot someone and they hire the person or actually I had this other Sourcer client where they didn't hire anyone. They found people on their own and they invited them for interviews. It didn't work out, but they said as feedback to the Client Executive, I can see that we have good talents on your platform. So, we want to continue with you. So just with having good talents on the platform, it doesn't have to be necessarily in placement. And also to another question I forgot in 2022, the Client Executive would be in charge of the client relationship. I would just be in charge of doing the training and sending the mini shoots.

Raya: Okay. So now it's more like now you're more involved in the client relationship.

Michelle: Yeah. Now I do everything basically. So, the Client Executive onboards them, presents it and after that it's me who does the whole relation. But before that it was the Client Executive.

Raya: Okay. That's super interesting. I don't know. That's well, this question is not part of my list, but on average, like, can you give me an estimate of, let's say from last year, how many Sourcer runs, that's what we call them?

Michelle: Sourcer run when you have the company.

Raya: Okay, so, how many Sourcer runs you had per month?

Michelle: It's really, really difficult because I think I maybe had one or two before this year and I was there four months, I think, but it was really, really not a lot. I don't remember. I think it was one or two, maybe three. Yeah. Not a lot.

Raya: And my last question is based on your experience, what changes or improvements do you think would be the most helpful for improving the effectiveness of the Sourcer model? When we, yes, we talked about the turning and the mini shoot model, but if you want to add something else for like a different point of view, let's say on the platforms or deep IT related or anything like that.

Michelle: Yeah, I think personally, I think what would make the most difference, also very difficult, but it's just to have more talents, much more relevant talents on the platform. Okay. I mean, we have a lot, which is good, but I think the more the better because that's the main point. Like if they see good talents, they will buy it. If they don't see, they will not.

Raya: Exactly. And actually, Morio mentioned the same, that company go to where talents are, like where you see a good pool of talent. Yeah?

Michelle: Yeah, exactly.

Raya: Thank you. I stop the recording.

## Appendix 5

### Interview with Sofia Bedonni

Raya: Welcome to this interview.

Sofia: Thank you.

Raya: And thank you for your time. So, about Sourcer and its performance throughout 2022, I want to ask you, as you are a Client Executive with quite some experience now, can you describe specific issues that clients have been experienced with Sourcer model over the past year?

Sofia: Yeah. So, if I have to give all the arguments that companies would like told me in the past when they reject Sourcer, it was first the lack of matching candidates, then the lack of freedom on the platform. A few companies, they told me, kind of, I want to search, you know, I want a text bar and be able to search Java developer and see the results. Whereas on our platform, you need to select the position among the category, etc. I received this feedback. But then the budget is a big thing.

Raya: But is it an issue?

Sofia: Yeah, I guess. I guess. Some, they might like the tool, but they don't have budget internally to move forward. So, the experience can be good, but then they cannot just purchase. Sometimes a lot of people, they test the platform, but they are not the decider in the company, which is pretty annoying because usually we try to prevent that and to directly talk with someone who decides. But sometimes it's not, they don't lie, but they, I don't know, they think they have the decision power and in the end, no, they need to validate the power, the budget internally with someone else. So, this can be an issue for the purchase as well.

Raya: Yeah.

Sofia: Maybe, is it in detail enough?

Raya: Yes, of course. I mean, whatever comes to your mind, it shouldn't be too long or too short.

Sofia: But then, yeah. So, it was mixed here before testing and also after testing.

Raya: Okay.

Sofia: Some issues, different issues.

Raya: Okay. So, about the specific aspects of Sourcer, like the, let's say, the skills or the job positions or even like the differentiation of talents or user interface, like usability of the platform. How is it? Is there any other feedback you received for specific aspects of Sourcer that are not working well or working well consequently? Like, for example, they cannot put, maybe someone said that they cannot put a specific skill, or we don't have that skill in our database or, yeah, I don't know.

Sofia: I received a few feedbacks, yes. First, before we could remove a talent from the matches, we had a little eye and if they would click on it, you would remove the match. Now, I think it's not existing

anymore and some clients, they would like, when they review the profile, it's not relevant, let's say, they don't want to see it anymore. Really, a bit like this Tinder matching, you know, action of swiping and you don't see again what you decide to reject. This, they would like this feature.

Raya: So, it just was working well but it was removed?

Sofia: Yeah.

Raya: Okay.

Sofia: I think it was removed actually because it was bugging or something like this.

Raya: Okay.

Sofia: I don't remember exactly the reason. They had feature before but then they removed it and some client asked. Then, the ability to be several users is not always working. Sometimes, because we decide, let's, for instance, Sourcer is one user only, but they can add team members and then it's sometimes not super clear what they can do or not do for them. Otherwise, specifically, only a few times clients told me I don't have this skill on the platform. In that case, we say, okay, which one? I suggest to the IT team and they create it. It's okay. It's pretty fast to implement. Feedback that the clients told me, it's not really related to product but it's more when they do a search, they cannot identify quickly which match has the search, the criteria they search. Now, I think it's been removed because we highlight the skill but before for a long time, it was not highlighted. I don't know if it's relevant since it's last year. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I think so. This was a really big feedback I received. Now, they highlight the skill so it's okay. It's really easy to find quickly the matching ones. Yeah. I think that would be it regarding tool. Otherwise, most of the people, they say it's very easy to use. It's great. Yeah.

Raya: Okay. Yeah. Yeah. So, you have feedback kind of from both. Both very positive and both very negative or most people what do they say?

Sofia: I would say most people like the tool like the UX UI and stuff. Then, they don't really know how to search sometimes so we teach them, we explain and that's where some issues can come but at first stage, the tool is great to use.

Raya: Okay. Do you have any examples of specific situations like let's say with a specific companies or industries where the Sourcer model failed to deliver the expected results well? In this case, it's just finding the matching talent.

Sofia: After the trial, no? Not before?

Raya: I mean, I don't know. It doesn't make sense after because before, they don't even know anything, right?

Sofia: Yeah. I mean, I was asking because in some cases with some industries but more if the size of the company is too small, then it also doesn't make sense to them because it's too expensive or they don't have enough needs to afford another tool.

Raya: Yeah.

Sofia: But then, once they test, yeah, example of situations, so proper company names, no?

Raya: Well, if you want to include them, if not, you can just say what industry they were in or what they were looking for maybe, what kind of talents, maybe two specific talents or two specific skills.

Sofia: Yeah. I can maybe tell you because I have them. We have all the feedbacks from all the companies in Sourcer, Notion, something. But for instance, Oxin was a company. It's like the state of one of the Swiss cantons. So, it's like a nice name to have on the platform. And they have an organization that is a bit weird. They have a lot of different HRs. Each of them is in charge of some positions to hire. So, no one is specialized. They all do a bit of few of IT positions. And they look for really specific profiles like something really a bit old school. Even for talent, it's not very attractive. But at the same time, it's the state. So, if they need this skill, I guess they cannot really change it. And they have problems because the salaries are really calculated according to the experience of the candidate, the diplomas, etc. It's not flexible and negotiable. And in that case, that company, they tested Sourcer for one month. But then, at first, it was not relevant. The matches were, they had like maybe one or two matches. And then they didn't really know how to use a matching system platform. They are really a bit old school and used to receive applications and that's it.

Raya: Oh, okay. Yeah.

Sofia: This was a concrete case of failure.

Raya: No, definitely. Just kidding. I can imagine because if our platform is for reverse recruitment, it's absolutely nothing in common with traditional.

Sofia: Exactly. So, they were mega too traditional.

Raya: Okay. So, have there been, like after receiving this feedback, have there been any major changes or updates to Sourcer in the last year? And if so, how do you think these changes have impacted its performance? So, just to extend a bit my question, not extend, but tell you what I already kind of know is that, okay, first the trial was one week, then you made it two weeks and then it was one month. That's one of the changes, no? From last year.

Sofia: Now, it's still two weeks. But before, we had a yearly license, so 12 months, as well six-month license and no, sorry, 12 months, three months and one month. And so, I used to say to some companies, look, by the one month, it's 2000, so you can test. Even if you pay, like you have access for a full month and then you can decide if you want for 12. So, it was not a test, they would still pay, but yeah, it was like that. And now they changed the, it's only 12 months license, but the trial is two weeks. Before it was one week only.

Raya: And why you decided to go only for like, okay, one month, Mark said when I had interviewed him, it's too short to see success.

Sofia: Sure.

Raya: But why you decided, is there any specific reason that you decided as a team of like Client Executives to make it 12 months only and not like, let's say, three months, six months and 12? Why only 12 months? Because of the bigger commitment or?

Sofia: Actually, it was more, to be honest, management decision, because for us, it brings more flexibility to be able to sell a three different length of license. It was bringing a bit more prospects, I think. But then, the decision that is totally fair, is that we would make the same efforts to sell 12 months and the one month. And especially after this state of Geneva, we put so many efforts and, in the end, just for one month license that they didn't renew. So, they decided not to sell the short length anymore. Because it was too many resources spent on our side for not a lot of results.

Raya: Okay. Makes sense. So, in your experience, are there any type, any specific industries or types of roles that clients were looking for and trying to hire, or at least interviewed through Sourcer? And that really reported more issues than the other ones that were more problematic for them?

Sofia: No, this I couldn't really identify like trends according to industries. I think because I lack some volume. We had a few companies buying Sourcer, but not like two, three in the same industry. Or so far, it's a bit diverse and different personas as well. So, it's a bit hard to identify a trend today.

Raya: Okay. Wow. Okay. And how, like thinking back to let's say December 2022. Yeah. At that moment, how did TieTalent measure the effectiveness of Sourcer model? What metrics you, metrics is like big word to say because like, yes, revenue that brings and so on. Some people said interviews.

Sofia: Yeah. Yeah. It's that. True that we could identify, you know, when a company was doing this one week, Sourcer round, and in the past, it was like that. If the company would succeed to open profiles, contact a few candidates and plan one interview, they would have more chances to purchase, to say, "yes, this tool is good. It enables me to find you good talents that I can interview." So, it was a good proof of, a good hint for us to say, high potential that they purchase.

Raya: So just to clear something out, because I am not clear on this. They can, when they do the one month free trial, right? They do. Or one month training or how do you call it?

Sofia: Now, we call it one month sprint.

Raya: Okay. One month sprint.

Sofia: Yes.

Raya: But basically, it's like a free trial, no?

Sofia: No, it's a bit complicated. It's what we call it. We present it one sprint, one month. So, the client can split within four weeks. First week, we do that. The talent agents also, they help the company every week to achieve some goals. But concretely, the company has two weeks if they want to unsubscribe. So, the first two weeks, if they don't say, "I cancel", it means they purchase the platform. And so, the one month is, the one-month sprint, the goal here is to like project the company. So, they see we are not helping them on only the first week of the trial, the full month. Jo suggested this new one month Sourcer sprint, and we're still testing out. So, let's see.

Raya: Okay. Okay. And I wanted to ask my actual question I asked you about the sprint was, so actually, can they schedule interview in the first two weeks that they haven't paid yet?

Sofia Yeah.

Raya: They can schedule interview?

Sofia: They can. And the rule in the contract is that they can contact any talents, plan interviews, et cetera. It's only if they hire someone in these two first weeks, trial weeks, that they automatically purchase the license. The Sourcer.

Raya: Okay. And you take the hiring. I understand. I thought that you can only schedule an interview after the first month pass. So, you as a Client Executive, have you considered any potential solutions to issues that clients have been experiencing with the Sourcer model? And if so, what approaches have you explored? Or just also the process of selling Sourcer. This is also interesting to mention.

Sofia: Yeah. Okay. Yeah, definitely. We tested a lot of different things. So, because when I arrived, we didn't have Sourcer. So, it came after like maybe three months very quickly. So, first, it was a lot of presenting the Sourcer and then we were a bit waiting for feedback. So, we had still this one-week Sourcer run with a few steps. And we used to plan the feedback call with the company on the Friday to get their feedbacks on the product and their answer on the "yes" or "no". It was always "no" almost, except for a few. And they would tell us everything that went wrong, which is fine, we could improve. But it was too easy for them to say "no". And we're like not in the same level. They were a bit like, "I take this is a nice startup, I'm going to tell them what to improve". And that's why we were not selling. So, we changed that. We removed the feedback call. So, yeah, the company first, they cannot complain. We are here for support, but we are not asking, oh, what's wrong? So, this we changed. And I think it helped a lot. It's a bit more towards this Netflix subscription where they don't call you to ask if you want to continue.

Raya: Then what else did we implement as a solution?

Sofia: Yeah, I think in the selling pitch as well, a bit about we are learning every day. So, I think now it's a bit more targeted to the persona. Before, it was really like a platform for sourcing. But now, if the person is really in need of a lot of support, then we can really emphasize on the Talent Sourcer here helping from A to Z, even with the sourcing license. If they are used to source a lot of people, they don't need support, we can more emphasize on the number we have, the number of talents, how they chat, et cetera. So, before, it was really a bit broad presentation. Now, we can represent, target the source of pitch according to who the company represented here.

Raya: Okay. Yeah. That's cool. So, some personalization.

Sofia: Yeah, exactly. In one word, it's really nice.

Raya: Okay. Thinking back again to December 2022, were there any particular client needs or pain points that talent was not addressing at the moment with the Sourcer model? And were you having, for example, discussions of how you're going to address this in 2023?

Sofia: Issues in 2022 that we knew we would have to address?

Raya: Yes.

Sofia: Yeah, the scaling aspect.

Raya: What is scaling?

Sofia: The fact that we sold a few licenses, we received some feedback. So, we have a lot of content on data, more data. And now, the goal is to analyze and find for who this product is working the best and how to address them. And this, not once or twice in the year, but 10,000 times, maybe more.

Raya: Wow. Okay.

Sofia: Yeah, the growth model. And I think still the persona. Morio is working a lot on the persona of who we are targeting. And it's always evolving. And we knew in 2022 that it wouldn't be that clear. We don't know yet, still now, if we have one persona or several. It's a bit, this is something still to find out.

Raya: Yeah. Okay. Okay. So, do you know as a Client Executive, for example, if you pitch to some company and they reject you straight away and they tell you, okay, "I don't want you because I use this and this." No? It happens, or no?

Sofia: Yeah.

Raya: So, what are these other tools or technologies that clients are using to not use Sourcer, but these other tools? And why do you think they are using them?

Sofia: Yeah. In my market, it's a bit specific to this market. So, Swiss-French market.

Raya: Yeah. French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Sofia: In the other, like in the German-speaking part, it's similar, but it can be other tools as well. In French-speaking part, there is a main job board called JobUp.

Raya: And everybody is using that. JobUp?

Sofia: Yeah. JobUp.

Raya: Okay.

Sofia: Yeah. And it's a job board. So, it's really like not the same tool as us, but they developed a CV tech. That's how they call it. So, talents can just drop their CV and companies can search in this database.

Raya: Okay. So, sorry to interrupt you, but does this mean that all the skills in the CV, regardless of what format is the CV in, the kind of the website or like, I don't know, they have like artificial intelligence too, that scraps the information and just puts it out there and they can just create it. So, it's like a lot less work on the talent side or what's the, or you don't know?

Sofia: I don't exactly know how it works, but I think that it's quite easy for a talent to sign up. Indeed. I think I did a talent registration once. It was pretty easy, but not less easy than us. I think this would be a bit, we are similar. And well, we have a lot of points to differentiate ourselves because this job world is super large. Like they cover all the fields, you know, whereas we are specialized in tech. So, we have a lot of differentiating points, but these companies are really known. I don't know the branding, their communication.

Raya: Yeah.

Sofia: Over the years was quite, I guess, strong because I think all my prospects, they use this job board. Yeah. But it's not working that well. So, people, they would come in, they post an ad, or they use a CV tech, but they don't, it's not easy for them to find. It's not a great experience neither. It's not specialized. So, for this, it's quite easy to differentiate. Then, but of course, there are LinkedIn, all the people, the companies that use LinkedIn. And this in 2022 was a bit harder to differentiate. And now with the new process, I think it's going to be a bit easier. Having, you know, the license, unlimited recruitment, but also one talent agent working for one vacancy per month. Yeah. This, I think, will be quite powerful.

Raya: Sounds really like, no, of course, you need, we need definitely to have some unique value proposition to differentiate from these job boards and from like other known tools, because it can be a great tool, but if people don't know how it works or they're not aware about it, it's harder. But okay.

Sofia: Yeah. So, these are the two main that people use. And then some companies, they mentioned all the job boards or a few, a few companies a bit more similar than that, what we do with matching system. It's mainly these two and agencies.

Raya: Agencies. Okay. So, agencies are still very much in.

Sofia: Yeah. Yeah. But they're expensive. So, yeah, I don't know if they find a lot of, I guess yes, but all the companies that I meet, they tell me, of course, we try to, to do it ourselves with this job boards, a bit on LinkedIn. And when it's really impossible to find, we, we ask an agency to help. Yeah. It's always a bit the second option. It's really rare that you have a company saying, "I'm here, use only an agency and I pay upfront". Usually, they try to find other ways.

Raya: No, it's normal because it's in their interest.

Sofia: Exactly. Yeah.

Raya: Okay. And well, good. A lot of insights. And last two questions. Looking forward, what are the talents plans for improving the source of model? So again, at December 2022, what were the plans from Client Executive side, but also if you have insights from other parts, you can absolutely share it. And how do you plan to ensure that it definitely gets to deliver and just value that like that you present, but like in your pitch, let's say, you know, because even if you present the Sourcer and for some companies not working well, so like it's, there is a mismatch. So if you kind of to, to exceed the expectations of the companies or to just be like, Sourcer or to be their preferred recruitment model.

Sofia: So, can you repeat the question?

Raya: Yes. So, uh, basically looking into the future, I would like thinking from December 2022.

Sofia: Okay.

Raya: What, at that moment, what were you thinking that can be improved so you can deliver more value to the customers?

Sofia: Okay. Um, in December 22 was, yeah, I think in my point of view was, um, educating the clients because even if they know how to source and stuff, they were not using the platform as our talent agents do. And, uh, it, for me it was that educating the client.

Raya: Okay. Yeah. So, more training. And what do you think like marketing department can do to improve, um, the Sourcer model or just make it easier for you to do your job? And one thing that was also connected to educating the, um, the clients, uh, you know, that we already have just, uh, success stories, but it's just going to be kind of more credibility to onboard people easily, more easily, at least in Germany.

Sofia: Yeah.

Raya: Uh, but, um, yeah, from your point of view, what do you think we can do? Um, you know, maybe videos, how to use the platform or guides, how to use the platform or whatever.

Sofia: Yeah, that's a good question. Uh, but concretely me, I think about at least two things. Um, first indeed, uh, on a lot of, um, websites, usually when you write, you already have a video of the demo, uh, super, you know, clear and you don't need to read anymore. You know, usually the, the software, they presented themselves with a 10 second demo or their tool and you can directly see. So, this, uh, definitely could help to educate the client directly use the platform or at least see that in one click they can search and receive matches that are open to opportunities. Uh, so this could be good. And then I read somewhere that, uh, a company to get to like purchase something or someone to purchase something, they need seven contact points, uh, from different channels or something like this, or it's a bit like the standards. Previously, uh, there has been seven touch points with the brand.

Raya: Well, it's, uh, this is more likely like this book that Laura shared with me about traction channels. I don't know if you, if they shared it with you when you started working here, but I told you something that everyone, it's a book about different attraction channels, like how we can find clients and onboard them and like reach them better. And it has like a lot of different types of strategies that you can do.

Sofia: Ah, so maybe this is something like, as you said, the inbound, the outreach, and then the other five or seven we can find in the book. So that's good.

Raya: It's the book on the onboarding that we receive when we start.

Sofia: That's interesting. And it's something like how any startup can achieve explosive customer growth traction.

Raya: Yes, I think so. Yeah. So, I'm not sure it's a totally a marketing theme, but for sure it's related. Maybe other departments can help as well. I don't really know.

Sofia: But, because I still have a lot of people in the end who tells me, sometimes I ask, oh, do you already know TieTalent? They say, oh no, I'm sorry. I'm like, no worries. It's the reason I call. And sometimes I pitch to someone in a proper meeting and they're like, "oh, it's super good. It's really interesting. It's just surprising. I haven't heard from you before." That's something I'm sure we can improve now. Yeah. Like even on the radio or something.

Raya: Imagine. Yeah. We can also try like traditional marketing.

Sofia: Why not?

Raya: So, a big billboard in Switzerland. Yeah. It might be expensive, but I think it's for "HR mommies".

Sofia: It's for HR mommies. Yes. And I had actually a bit of ideas, but I never, I found, I have a few ideas, but I should concrete them. I should make them concrete. I didn't do so far. My ideas were billboard. It's quite expensive. So, I don't know if they would pay, but at least some in magazine or, you know, HR magazine, not as reprinted, but online and just people to see or newsletter about HR and be mentioned in that things. Also be, at least inform every HR school and you know, where the recruiters, they go to learn how to source and stuff. At least introduce that to them because maybe they don't know. And last was also Mark doing some podcast. I was like, ah, you should do some podcast because you're a co-founder. You have a good story to tell.

Raya: Yeah. But I also watched some stories from before where they used to go to fairs or some events and he presents and like, there were people like on the video that were engaged and they were sitting and listening to him like hypnotized. So, he definitely should do something like this. We can do something like this for marketing, but we need bigger marketing team if we want to do podcast.

Sofia: Yeah, exactly.

Raya: No, they already do exactly as you said, the fairs and, but it can be more and more. I think.

Sofia: Definitely. But as you said, it requires some resources.

Raya: Yeah. Yeah, indeed. But okay. I stop the recording.

## Appendix 6

### Interview with Gregoire Plaignaud

Raya: So, yes, welcome to our interview.

Gregoire: Thank you.

Raya: So, you are a senior Talent Sourcer at TieTalent since 2021?

Gregoire: Yes, since July 2021.

Raya: Okay, so almost two years. My first question is how long have you been using the Sourcer model and what have been your experiences with it so far?

Gregoire: The Sourcer model was launched in January 2022, so it's a bit more than a year now, one year and three months. And the experience so far is that it's a product under construction with the first positive output, but we did not close at all our prospect trying the solution so far. And the more we have gone through the year, the more we improved the product based on client feedback each time. And I think we had around 20 clients that tried so far, the Sourcer license, but we closed less than 50%. Like, I think we closed a third. And the experience so far is that it's a promising product, but we need to really develop our search tool to fill the client needs that at the beginning were not that filled. And we keep improving the search, especially after the summer 2022, because we had a huge trouble with the search tool. And the IT team put a strong effort in September, and since October, the search is really way more accurate.

Raya: Okay. And for not being able to satisfy the client needs, coming to your answer, first, have you identified a problem like you don't know what exactly the client needs are, or just the platform not working well?

Gregoire: Basically, the platform not working well, meaning that some clients have expectations of what candidate they want to see. And when they are proposed results by the algorithm or the search, the results are not that accurate. And also, the trouble is that sometimes you have profiles that are outdated, and so you contact them, client contact them because the profile interests them, but they never get the feedback. And this gives a bad experience. And we actually developed a feature at the end of 2022 to put badges for responsive candidates and fresh candidates, and we have seen the impact on clients since.

Raya: Okay. So, if you can tell me more about the clients who have been using the search tool model, meaning like what types of businesses are they? Is it big corporations, middle-sized startups? And what kind of talents are they searching for? Are they more like IT, just all marketing, or there is like equal ratio between both?

Gregoire: For the type of candidates, it's more IT. This I can say for sure. For companies, we have a bit of everything. From a big corporation like, I don't know, Nintendo is using for example, to smaller companies. And we have from different industries, service companies, we have a bank, we have a big industrial group. So, it's really different. But yeah, more for IT profiles.

Raya: Okay. And already, like, because you are one of the people that also onboard clients and trains them, no? So, have you noticed any common issues or concerns between all the clients that you've talked with? Let's say two or three main ones, they have helped with the search tool model. And probably one of them could be like the outdated talents. Is that something that they have raised concern about?

Gregoire: Yeah, this they raised concern about because when they contact a candidate and they do not get an answer, when they get an answer, it's like, "Hey, I just found a job". So, the actuality of profile is the first concern. And then it depends a lot on the person. Because you have some companies that have the recruiter using the social license, who is a tech recruiter and know how to search, know the skills, know the market industry. And you have some clients, they have an HR who is not tech at all. And it's like if you try to discover Chinese for them. So, the issue is that they get a bit overwhelmed or lost by all the skills, all this new thing when they are just used to post an ad and to check if the keyword on the job description is on the CV and they do not go further. Whereas sometimes a keyword is not exactly written, but you know that the guy did this job, so you know he will do that. But for this, you need to be tech recruiter.

Raya: Okay, then for me, this means like the platform is not really like 100% responsive and easy to use for all kinds of recruiters that want to use it. Even if we aim to satisfy everybody, but it's not that easy.

Gregoire: Yes, because some of them just lack the technical knowledge. So, in this case... We try to train them, to explain to them, to answer their questions.

Raya: Okay. So, basically, can you walk me through the process of using the Sourcer? Like you as a senior Talent Sourcer, what steps do you take? And so far, what challenges have you encountered? And just step by step process from finding the client or onboarding the client to the final step?

Gregoire: First, we realized it's hard to interest clients because basically the way we go is like they subscribe to a one-year license and they have a first week of onboarding where they get to try the solution. And they have one week to retract if they want. And we had a lot of clients that were in the end not enough committed to really fully try the solution in one week. And therefore, they had to retract and not buy the license because they were not convinced. For this, the first solution is that we use the possibility to extend the training of one more week. But even that, sometimes it does not help us in the end. And that's why we moved toward one month onboarding in the last four months, in the recent months, because we realized the one week is really short. And basically, the one week process was like you start for example on Monday. So on Tuesday, on Monday, you can learn, you can try the solution and all. The Talent Sourcer attached to you will create vacancies for you on TieTalent and will send you a first batch of what we call FRI profile, "fresh, ready and interested". Meaning the Talent Sourcer has called the candidates to check this. So, when the client contacts them, they get an answer. And we send also search links. And so, you have the training. It's a half an hour to one hour video call on the second day where we really show the search tool, the platform, the actions to do, what to look for. We do some searches together to really put the theory into practice. And after that, during the week, we keep every day the Talent Sourcer, send a quick email with either some profiles or some search links to accompany the client in using the platform. And we follow up with the candidates that are contacted by the client. So meaning we call them, we send mails to get them. And the goal is that on the Friday, they say "yes", we continue. And on the Monday, at least they do not send an email like no, we get out.

But we realize one week is too short. And that's why this process has been moved to a one-month process now with two weeks to back off.

Raya: Okay, well, so the extension is one very big improvement, you can say.

Gregoire: And the major trouble we had is that basically clients were in the mood of trying a new solution and not in the mood of I have a new tool.

Raya: And so, they were not willing to learn how to use the new solution?

Gregoire: They were seeing it as a trial. Meaning that "I tried a tool, but I'm not engaged". Whereas we want them to be in a mood that, okay, "I bought the license, I have a new tool, so I need to discover this new tool".

Raya: Yeah.

Gregoire: And this is the mentality we look for.

Raya: Okay, so you want more or less for them to be excited about using this and learning more how to use it?

Gregoire: Yeah.

Raya: Okay. So after this long process, like what is the moment that you say, okay, Sourcer was effective for this company? Is it when they onboard? Not onboard, but I don't know, hire a person that you shoot or like?

Gregoire: Hiring is the ideal because when a Sourcer client hire one candidate, he wins compared to the on-demand model in terms of fees. So, it's viable as soon as you hire one person compared to the on-demand model for the client. But us internally, we consider a successful use of the Sourcer license when we see interviews, because that means there have been some searches, there have been some contact of candidates, there have been some answer of candidates and there is a process that starts. And for us, that's where we see, okay, here there is a successful use of the Sourcer license.

Raya: Okay.

Gregoire: Well, so not hire, but interview because we are still, I guess, in the process of developing this product. Yeah. And because hiring depends on the offer, it can depend on a lot of things. But if you see a Sourcer client is having two or three candidates in process with some interviews happening, etc. You know the usage was successful.

Raya: Okay. So basically the metrics, if we talk about metrics, is number of interviews.

Gregoire: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because hiring does not depend on the product. It depends on the person and the company. So here we do not have a weight to play in the hiring, in the contract, etc. That's why it's not a good metric. But interview, here, yes, it clearly says on the platform you had good candidates,

they were responsive, interested, matching and we are starting processes. And the product delivered his function.

Raya: Okay. And so you mentioned that one thing that you changed was extending this trial period first from one week to two weeks and after two weeks to one month. What are some other changes that have been made on the Sourcer model?

Gregoire: It's mostly on the search to put new options like the industry, to put a mandatory possibility that you put a skill mandatory, meaning the search result will only display profile having this skill. But that's just for now. Yeah. No, no, it was deployed in July.

Raya: Okay, okay, okay. So, the possibility to make some skills or points or keywords that are mandatory because back in time it was not mandatory.

Gregoire: So the algorithm was proposing profile that had A skill, B skill or just the A skill or just the B skill. Sometimes no skill at all, but it's a match because of the position and the location. And now the possibility to really have accurate results, meaning maybe you won't get 500 candidates matching on your search, but you will maybe get 12, but those 12 are perfect matches.

Raya: Okay.

Gregoire: So we deployed, it was in November, I think, or December, badges on the profile to indicate if they are highly responsive or not, if they are recently created, those kind of badges to highlight the responsive candidates. We improved the share profile feature, meaning you can share your profile with another member of your company on TieTalent. It's way easier and way clearer. We improved the chat functionality where now you can attach files and you can link all info for an interview.

Raya: You mean chat between the companies and the talent?

Gregoire: Yes, but the chat integrated within TieTalent.

Raya: Okay.

Gregoire: I think that's all. The most important is the search improvement and it's continuous.

Raya: Okay. And even though you're a Talent Sourcer, it's more on the talent side, but you also need to speak with clients, and you also need to onboard them to train them. So, you typically communicate with them via video chat, or you go sometimes to visit them?

Gregoire: More video chat, but I adapt also a lot on the phone.

Raya: Okay. And what questions do they ask? Like frequently asked questions or concerns that they have for the platform? Imagine that especially these recruiters are not 'tech savvy'.

Gregoire: They ask questions about the skills, questions about the position. Sometimes they ask why do I see this profile in my results or why do not I get results? Because maybe you put too many skills or too different skills or not adapted. Let's not go into too much detail, but sometimes you're looking for a

front-end developer and they put, I don't know, C-sharp which will be a back-end framework and it's not matching with front-end. So obviously you don't get results.

Raya: Okay. Understood. And last question. Are there any specific areas that you think that the Sourcer model could be improved? And first, if so, what are they? And also, how you think they could be addressed?

Gregoire: First, our first trouble is the freshness of talents, if you can speak like that, to always have updated candidates on the profiles. This we need to improve and it's a big focus. The search, once again, continuous improvement of the search because it's an artificial intelligence algorithm that you need to feed. You need to adapt the ponderation between the criteria. So, for example, what is more important in terms of matching is the position, the skills or else. So, what you put in that on top. We are also aiming to improve the answer rate of candidates, meaning we want to improve the chat and the follow-up possibilities. And now the new onboarding model of one month instead of one or two weeks.

Raya: Okay. So, if we go back to the skills, do you think it's going to be useful, let's say for a client on the client side to provide them with from marketing, to provide them with kind of guides or to have a specific landing page that only our clients can access. Just something that I have now on top of my mind, but something that only they can access and then they can find, let's say, guide how to create a first vacancy. If you look for front end, back end, like a couple of, let's say, jobs combined in packs and different guides for them. Like what skills to put, what skills not to put. Do you think that's going to be something useful?

Gregoire: It can be useful. And we are actually also planning to deploy kind of a video game tutorial on TieTalent. So, when you first log in as a client on your Sourcer account, you get kind of taken by the hand on how to create your first vacancy, how to create your first search, what are the possibilities, etc. And then ideally, and here marketing can be of great help to create kind of an encyclopedia where you can quickly search and random questions about skills, about search, about whatever.

Raya: Okay. Well, that's insightful indeed. It's going to take a lot of work, but it's not something impossible for sure.

Gregoire: No, it's not impossible. And the way I picture it, you have like highlighted words. So, if, for example, you are on the back end definition and there will be, I don't know, Java somewhere, you can click on Java and it leads you to the Java page. And so, every page is kind of interconnected.

Raya: Yeah, but the same as the blog more or less.

Gregoire: Yeah.

Raya: Okay. Yeah, that's interesting idea. Insightful. I'm going to include it in the recommendations for sure.

Gregoire: Okay.

Raya: Well, so this was our interview. That's the end of the interview. I stopped the recording.

## Appendix 7

### Interview with Xavier Lassiera Pérez

Raya: Thank you for your time and welcome to this interview. I'm glad to have you here. First question, what are the most common issues or bugs that users have reported in the past months, well basically since you started at the end of last year, when using Sourcer model? Do you have a couple on top of your mind?

Xavier: Company side, I think we have problems with emails reliability, like some delays, some emails that are not being sent. I think these are the main... For Sourcer, after they make the Sourcer registration. Yeah, maybe the talent alert came out at any time and things like that. And also, what's like the talent search, they are not receiving what they expect with the filter that they have entered.

Raya: Okay, so basically mismatch.

Xavier: Probably, yeah, probably the main complaints are mismatch.

Raya: Okay. So, how does the front-end design, like the past one that was from when you started until the end of last year, how does this front-end design interface impact the usability and functionality of the Sourcer model in your opinion?

Xavier: Okay, so, when I started the platform was, I think, not UX friendly. Like, for example, when you do a talent search, you went to visit a profile and when you go back, the page got refreshed and things like this, but it was not very smooth to use.

Raya: Okay.

Xavier: So, this is one of the main issues, I think, that we had. Like, it was not very comfortable and easy.

Raya: Yeah.

Xavier: In the last month, we've been adding the highlighting of the things that you are searching and stuff like that, and the tags, so that they can see more why the talent is a match for them. Like, they can understand it more easily.

Raya: Mm-hmm.

Xavier: And the old code, it had made me slower to build new stuff. You know, stuff, the old UI, because we had to fix some stuff and make it more friendly for the user before adding new features. Yeah. This is more the whole perspective from the question.

Raya: Yeah. I mean, it's from your point of view, you're the professional, so whatever you say, I accept it.

Xavier: Okay.

Raya: And have you identified you as a front-end developer? Any areas where Sourcer can be improved or optimized from a front-end perspective? And if so, can you explain how?

Xavier: Okay. So, from the acquisition point in talents, to get more talents in the platform, so we make Sourcer more. I think we are missing some SEO optimizations to make the page more visible for Google and all the search engines. And also, I think the registration process should be redone on the talent and the company side.

Raya: Mm-hmm.

Xavier: Because I think it's not very friendly and it's a little bit hard to do. Also, in mobile, it could be improved. Because I think half of the talents does it in desktop, half on mobile, so we should focus a bit also in mobile and in the spot. And also, company side, I think adding new features and more filters and making more relevant the talent search would be the best. I think we should also redo the hiring process section of it.

Raya: The what process?

Xavier: The hiring process. Like when you contact a talent, then how the information is displayed when you can do an interview. Like all this part, the interview part, is a little bit messy, I would say. Like this can be improved and we can integrate it with, I don't know, with Google Calendar and things like that to make it more strong and easy to use. Mainly that's it. For me, the main points to improve is registration and interview.

Raya: Okay. So, for you, have you experienced any specific user scenarios where Sourcer model was not performing well? And if so, what were they? Like, well, from the company side, I guess.

Xavier: I think when we started, maybe our focus was not to the, like our user focus from like we were selling this to people that are not very tech-savvy. Like they don't have the knowledge to use it, I would say. Like they are not technology advanced enough to understand what to put in the filter. Yeah, so that's something that also the people mentioned that the clients are basically not educated on how to use, not all of them, there are some who are... There are some who are tech savvy, but like the other ones... Even if they don't have this basic knowledge, I think like the product is not for them. So that's why it was not performing as good as we expected, I think. But yeah, now that we are focusing a bit more tech savvy people, I think this will increase, I think.

Raya: Okay. And have you conducted any user testing or usability stages on Sourcer? And if so, what were the results initially? Can you give an example? I don't know, like how... well, basically is it your responsibility or Morio's responsibility to check the usability of Sourcer and to make sure that all the features are working or not?

Xavier: So, yeah, mainly we are doing like developer testing before putting something new into production.

Raya: Okay.

Xavier: So mainly me and Morio are doing all the tests to see if everything works right, but yeah.

Raya: And at first, did you get any bugs, like in specific places or no?

Xavier: In the beginning, when I started?

Raya: Yeah, when you started.

Xavier: Yeah, there were a lot of bugs in all the forms that we have in the... like they were not reliable and you went out to another page and the form was reset and you have to put everything again and things like that. So yeah, we did a lot of... I think Morio is the main person that is testing everything and reporting everything. But yeah, me while developing, I can also see other things that are failing and report them.

Raya: Okay. And are there any performance or scalability issues with Sourcer that need to be addressed from a front-end perspective?

Xavier: Yes, right now we are missing a lot of testing, like automatic testing.

Raya: Uh-huh.

Xavier: We have very few of them and then if we need, if we want to keep growing, testing manually will become harder. So yeah, we have to have something automatic to be confident that we want the things that we are developing. And yeah, I've been improving the code base to make it more... following more principles of code to make it more scalable and things like that. So yeah, it's a work in progress, but the main issue that I found right now is the lack of testing.

Raya: The lack of testing. Okay. And well, my next question is if you can suggest any features or improvements on the Sourcer that could enhance the usability?

Xavier: Absolutely.

Raya: But you already said about the interview and registration. Is there something else that you would like to add?

Xavier: No, no, no. Like right now I think the main thing that we should focus is fixing the interview part.

Raya: Okay.

Xavier: To be honest, this is one part that I think will provide a lot of value to companies.

Raya: So basically what's your idea? How to fix the interview part?

Xavier: I don't know. This we have to sit down and think a lot of it.

Raya: Okay, okay.

Xavier: So this is... From the UX perspective I think it's very, very hard to use right now.

Raya: Okay.

Xavier: You have to learn a lot to be able to use it. It's not very... Like you see it and you don't know how to use it without an explanation.

Raya: And you mean on the company side?

Xavier: On the company side, yeah.

Raya: And it's basically what they can do the interview in the platform or it's more like for scheduling the interview?

Xavier: Yeah, for scheduling and also, they have also the chat feature that this has been improving also like in the last month I think. And this also could be improving because right now I think we cannot compete with other chats, LinkedIn or something like that. But we can improve this to have all the data in our system and all the conversation between company and talent to see how everything is performing. Everything related to the talent contact and interview, and all this is...

Raya: Okay. This is something to focus on. So, what role do you think front-end development team can play in improving the overall user experience? Like is it the biggest role or you think it's more back-end and front-end together?

Xavier: I mean it's back-end and front-end because performance and I don't know, talent search is a very back-end heavy feature that has a lot to do with the performance of the Sourcer. But front-end is very important also to make the platform look beautiful and to make it easy to use and comfortable. I think it's very important so people want to use it and doesn't want to change to another tech talent platform.

Raya: Okay. Yeah, makes sense. And then one last question – What do you think marketing can do to just improve and make it easier?

Xavier: I don't know. I think like where to focus on the development standpoint like where we can get... Like where to spend our time and make it the most profit of it. I don't know. I'm just asking myself. Maybe marketing says that this needs to be improvement or we need to do one page, so we get more acquisition or whatever. So, like the prioritization of the task related to that I think is very important to us to spend our time like mindfully.

Raya: Okay. Well, this was my interview. Thank you so much for the answers.

## Appendix 8 Sourcer Landing Page Metrics

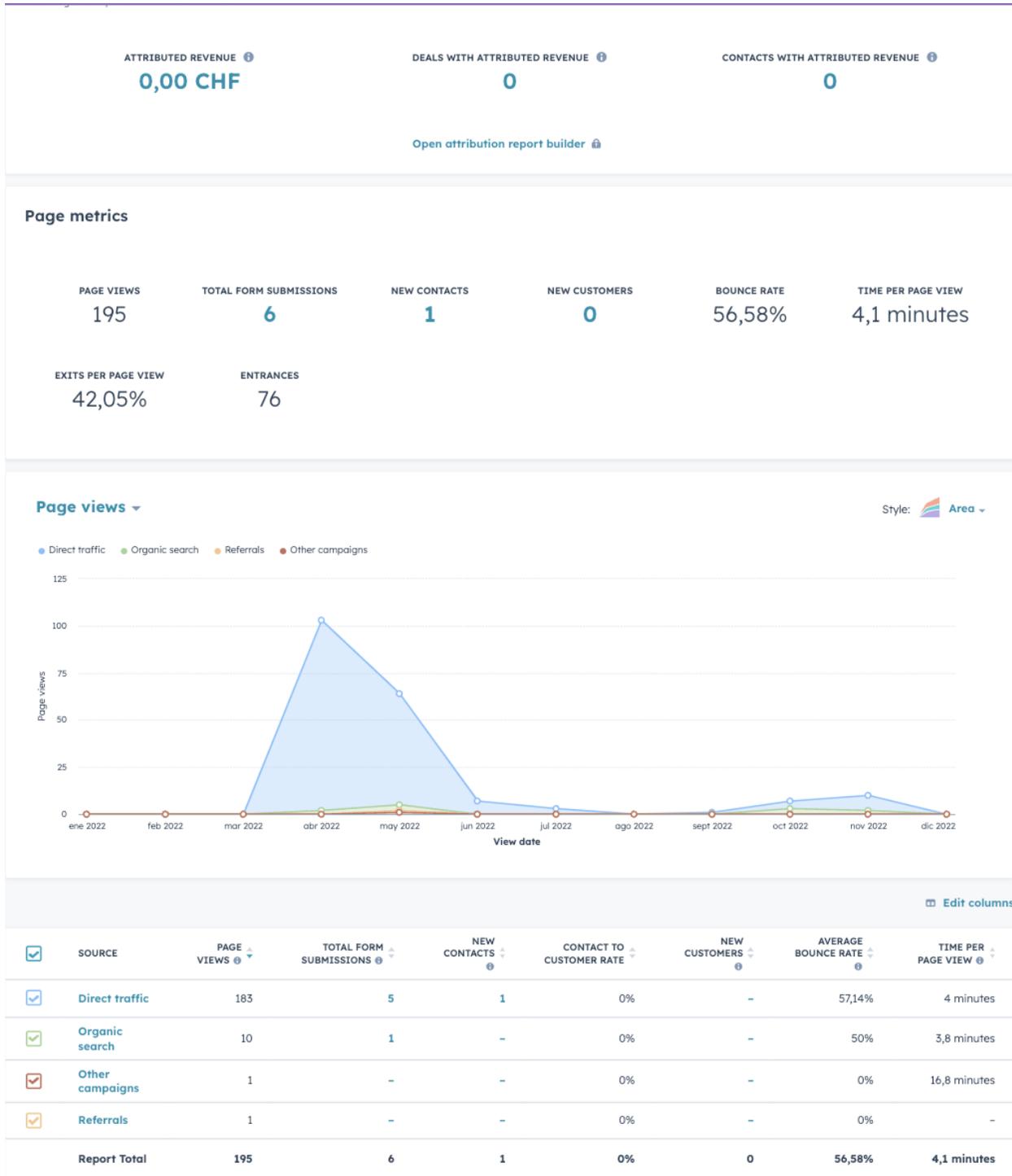


Figure 2: Sourcer LP Metrics 2022; Source: HubSpot

## Appendix 9

### Competitive Analysis and Benchmarking Results

During the competitive analysis, it was determined how well the landing page of TieTalent’s Sourcer service compared to the Active Sourcing service landing page of Lionstep, the services for Employers landing page of Otta, the services for Employers landing page of Hired, the Truffls landing page for mobile recruiting and the services for Employers landing page of Otta. All these competitors were brought up during personal communication with the CEO of TieTalent, Marc Trillou.

A benchmark table was used to compare the features UI/UX design, usability, and functionality of these landing pages during the course of this analysis.

Landing Page	Features	UI/UX Design	Usability	Functionality
Active Sourcing by <a href="#">Lionstep</a>	Benefits of the service, video showing onboarding process, ‘Book a demo’ option, clients’ logos and feedback, statistics, candidate pool and filtering options	Professional, appealing, company branding	Simple navigation, concise messaging, and quick loading	Provides a variety of helpful features
Services for Employers by <a href="#">Otta</a>	Benefits of the service, onboarding process, ‘Book a demo’ option, clients’ feedback, 14-day free trial, applicant tracking system, diversity hiring, and job matching	User-friendly, modern, colorful, company branding	Simple navigation, concise messaging, and quick loading	Provides a system for matching
Services for Employers by <a href="#">Hired</a>	Benefits of the service, onboarding process, ‘Book a demo’ option, clients’ logos, clients’ feedback, 14-day free trial, candidate pool, interviews, and salary information	Professional, clean, easy to use, company branding	Simple navigation, concise messaging, and quick loading	Provides several features including the possibility to schedule interviews
Mobile Recruiting by <a href="#">Truffls</a>	Benefits of the service, ‘Book a demo’ option, clients’ logos, clients’ feedback, user-friendly mobile app, and instant messaging	Modern, sleek, easy to use, company branding	Simple navigation, concise messaging, and quick loading	Provides a few beneficial features for easier onboarding
Sourcer by <a href="#">TieTalent</a>	Benefits of the service, ‘Book a demo’ option, briefly described onboarding process, candidate sourcing and pipeline management	Average design, HubSpot-built	Simple to use	Practical features and subscription prices shown

These landing pages all have distinctive strengths that can meet the demands of various employers, considering the fact that they are all fiercely competitive in the recruitment sector.

Throughout the analysis, some of the major weaknesses in TieTalent's Sourcer landing page and those are the following:

- **Lack of Visual Appeal:** Compared to some of the other landing pages, the design of the TieTalent Sourcer page lacks the contemporary aesthetics and visual appeal. To give visitors an experience that is more engaging, the overall design elements, such as the color scheme and typography, could be improved in a way to also include the branding elements of TieTalent similar to its competitors.
- **Limited Use of Visuals:** To improve the overall design's appeal and make the content appealing and engaging, the page could use more visual components, such as pictures, icons, or illustrations. This can aid in grabbing visitors' attention and making a more lasting impression.
- **Text-Heavy Layout:** The layout of the landing page appears to be text-heavy, which could be confusing to visitors and make it more difficult for them to quickly understand the important information. Following examples from Hired and Lionstep with more whitespace, visual cues, and clear messaging could aid in enhancing the content's readability and comprehension.
- **Lack of Design Elements:** The landing page's design elements, such as buttons, headings, and spacing, appear inconsistent in some places. Because of this inconsistency, the visual experience may be not as professional and cohesive, which could cause user confusion and undermine their trust in the service.
- **Limited Use of Interactive Elements:** To improve the user experience and make it more interactive, the TieTalent Sourcer landing page could use more interactive elements like free trial options and client feedback. To pique user interest and promote participation, this may include elements like interactive forms, animated graphics, or demos.

Overall, each landing page demonstrates strengths in various areas and offers special features and advantages that are tailored to the requirements of hiring managers. With its large candidate pool, flexible filtering options, and analytics, Lionstep's Active Sourcing service stands out and offers useful tools for employers looking for effective sourcing solutions. Through personalized job matching and diversity hiring features, Otta's Services for Employers set themselves apart from the competition, increasing the possibility of a more focused and inclusive hiring process.

Interview scheduling and salary insights are two areas where Hired's Services for Employers truly shine, helping employers hire more effectively and efficiently. With a user-friendly mobile app, tailored job recommendations, and instant messaging features, Truffls' Mobile Recruiting stands out and provides a seamless mobile experience for both employers and candidates.

It is important to note, though, that the TieTalent Sourcer Service seems to have some flaws, especially in terms of design. The landing page's unattractive appearance, limited use of images, and chaotic design choices could affect how users interact with it and how they perceive the service as a whole. Also, the page lacks some basic features that all or almost all competitors have like a free-trial option, display of client feedback, (video) onboarding process, and in general more personalized, needs-tailored appeal.



In conclusion, all of these platforms – Lionstep, Otta, Hired, and Truffls – offer useful features, approachable user interfaces, and effective functionalities that can improve the hiring procedure. To match the standards set by its rivals, TieTalent Sourcer Service might need to make additional design improvements.