



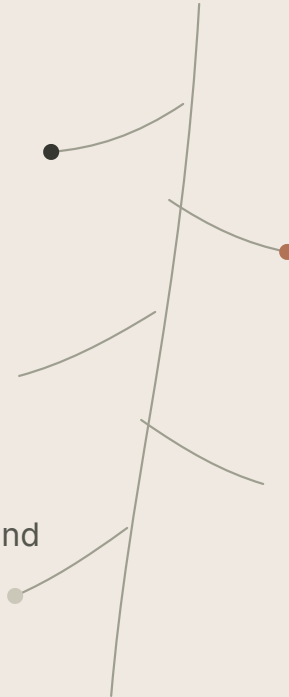
TERRA
TALENT



FOR FOUNDERS AND HIRING EXECUTIVES

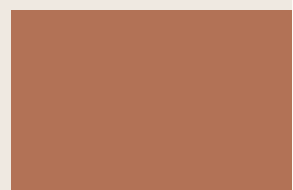
The Early-Stage Recruiting Stack

What you actually need to source, engage, assess and
manage talent as the company grows.



Developed by Terra Talent, May 2023. This 2026 edition is
substantially rebuilt.

[TERRATALENT.COM](https://terratalent.com)



PRICING REVIEWED AUGUST 2026

Public list prices below were reviewed in August 2026 and are a snapshot, not a quote. Vendors change packaging frequently. Confirm current pricing before purchase.

KEY PRINCIPLE**Buy capability, not products**

Tools change quickly. The jobs they perform change much more slowly. Evaluate every product against the capability you need, the market you recruit in and the operating burden it creates.

01



Sourcing

Sourcing is the ability to search a market deliberately rather than wait for applicants.

You need enough precision to filter by company, function, seniority, geography and technical background, then turn the result into a credible market map.

Terra shortlist

01 **LinkedIn Recruiter Lite**

A sensible starting point for low-volume recruiting where LinkedIn remains the main talent graph. As of August 2026, LinkedIn lists a single Recruiter Lite licence at \$170 per month or \$1,680 per year. It searches up to third-degree connections and includes 30 InMail credits per month. That makes it useful for occasional hiring, but materially more limited than full LinkedIn Recruiter for deep market mapping.

02 **SeekOut Recruit Core**

A strong alternative or supplementary sourcing layer when you need broader search, contact data and more structured technical-market discovery. SeekOut lists Recruit Core at \$149 per month when paid annually, or \$179 month to month, with 500 contact credits per month and a large external profile database.

03 **LinkedIn Recruiter**

For a recruiting team working continuously across difficult markets, the full product is the more serious version of LinkedIn's sourcing platform. It has broader network access, ATS integrations and materially higher messaging capacity. Pricing is quote-based.

PUBLIC LIST PRICING REVIEWED AUGUST 2026. A SNAPSHOT, NOT A QUOTE.

WHAT TO ASSESS

- ☐ Does it actually cover the talent markets you hire from?
- ☐ Can it search adjacent industries cleanly?
- ☐ Are profiles current?
- ☐ Can the recruiter build and save real market maps?
- ☐ What happens to projects and data if you cancel?

For hard-tech searches, test on a real role before buying. A giant database is irrelevant if it cannot distinguish the fifteen people who actually understand the system you are building.

02



Contact data

Contact data turns a name into a reachable person.

Accuracy varies by geography, seniority and industry, and it degrades over time.

Use what you already pay for first

Several modern recruiting platforms now bundle contact discovery.

SeekOut Recruit Core includes contact credits. Ashby includes a monthly allowance of sourcing email lookups on its Foundations plan. Gem advertises email finding inside its sourcing and CRM product.

Do not buy a separate enrichment tool until you know the bundled data is not good enough.

If you need a separate enrichment layer

Apollo

Apollo is built primarily for sales rather than recruiting, but it is a low-cost option for contact enrichment and can be useful as a fallback source.

As of August 2026, public annual pricing starts at \$49 per seat per month for Basic, \$79 for Professional, and \$119 for Organization, with the Organization plan requiring at least three seats.

Do not judge a contact provider from its global coverage claim. Give it twenty people whose details you already know and measure the hit rate in your market.

03



Outreach and CRM

A recruiting CRM should let you:

- ☐ build talent pools before a role exists
- ☐ sequence and track outreach
- ☐ record previous conversations
- ☐ stop multiple people contacting the same candidate
- ☐ personalise at scale without turning the message into spam
- ☐ rediscover people you already know when a new role opens

Terra shortlist

If you are already buying an all-in-one recruiting platform, use its CRM before adding another.

01 **Ashby Foundations**

Combines ATS, sourcing CRM, sequences, scheduling and reporting. Public pricing is \$400 per month for companies up to 100 employees, with a published annual-commitment discount.

02 **Gem All-in-One**

Combines sourcing, CRM, ATS, scheduling and analytics. Gem's startup programme currently offers reduced pricing for early-stage companies, and its public pricing display for a 1 to 10 person company starts around \$130 per month on an annual term. Pricing changes with company size.

PUBLIC LIST PRICING REVIEWED AUGUST 2026. A SNAPSHOT, NOT A QUOTE.

Do not buy Ashby and Gem simply because both are good products. That is paying twice for the same workflow.

WHAT TO ASSESS

- ☐ Can outreach genuinely be personalised?
- ☐ Can sequences stop automatically when someone replies?
- ☐ Can you see previous contact across the company?
- ☐ Can hiring managers participate without destroying the data?
- ☐ Can the CRM become a reusable talent network rather than a graveyard of old searches?

04



Applicant tracking

The ATS is the system of record.

Every applicant, sourced candidate, stage, interview, score and decision should ultimately resolve here.

The most important buying question is not how impressive the demo looks.

It is:

Can the company run its
actual hiring process inside
this system without creating
shadow spreadsheets around it?

Terra shortlist

01 **Ashby Foundations**

Our strongest shortlist option for an ambitious early company expecting recruiting complexity. It combines ATS, CRM, sourcing, scheduling and analytics in one system. The Foundations plan is publicly listed at \$400 per month for companies up to 100 employees.

02 **Gem All-in-One**

Particularly interesting for a very early company that wants sourcing and CRM depth without assembling several products. The startup programme gives young companies aggressive introductory pricing, with pricing scaling by company size.

03 **Workable Standard**

A simpler option for companies that want recruiting and core HR tooling together. Public pricing for a company with 1 to 20 employees is \$299 per month, with recruiting, sourcing and unlimited active jobs included in the Standard plan.

PUBLIC LIST PRICING REVIEWED AUGUST 2026. A SNAPSHOT, NOT A QUOTE.

Check the exit before the entrance

Before signing any ATS contract, confirm that you can export:

- ☐ candidates
- ☐ contact details
- ☐ source information
- ☐ interview history
- ☐ scorecards
- ☐ notes
- ☐ stages
- ☐ rejection reasons

in a format another system could actually ingest.

Your recruiting history becomes more valuable every year. Do not trap it.

05



Scheduling

Scheduling should remove coordination work, not create another platform to administer.

First choice: use the ATS

Ashby and Gem both include recruiting scheduling workflows. If your ATS can handle candidate availability, panel calendars and automated reminders well, use it.

If you do not yet have an ATS

Calendly Standard is \$10 per seat per month when billed annually and covers the needs of a founder or individual recruiter well.

Calendly Teams is \$16 per seat per month when billed annually and adds more team-level routing and administration.

For complex multi-person interview loops, move scheduling into the recruiting system as soon as calendar coordination starts consuming real recruiter time.

06



Interview and scorecard management

Do not buy separate assessment software simply because it exists.

The essential capabilities are:

- ☐ structured interview plans
- ☐ consistent scorecards
- ☐ designated competency ownership
- ☐ written feedback before debrief
- ☐ a reliable record of evidence

Ashby and Gem both support structured interview workflows and scorecards inside the ATS.

When an interview-intelligence layer becomes useful

At higher interview volume, products such as BrightHire can record and transcribe interviews, generate structured notes and connect output back to the ATS. BrightHire is quote-priced.

This can be useful when the bottleneck is interviewer consistency, coaching or note quality.

It is unnecessary when the company is running six interviews a month.

07



Reporting

A recruiting dashboard should answer operational questions without an analyst.

At minimum:

- ☐ Where is each search stuck?
- ☐ How long are candidates spending in each stage?
- ☐ Which sources produce qualified candidates?
- ☐ Where do candidates drop out?
- ☐ What is offer acceptance?
- ☐ How long does it take to produce a qualified shortlist?
- ☐ Which interviewers or stages are creating delay?

Use the reporting inside the ATS first.

Ashby is particularly strong here and includes dashboards and reporting in its all-in-one product. Gem also includes pipeline analytics and forecasting.

Do not add a standalone analytics product until the questions you cannot answer are valuable enough to justify another system.

08



Talent intelligence

Talent intelligence means understanding a market rather than merely finding an individual.

For climate and hard tech, this matters because the right answer is often in an adjacent industry.

The useful questions are:

- ☐ Where do people with this capability currently work?
- ☐ Which companies have trained them?
- ☐ Which neighbouring industries use the same underlying physics or manufacturing process?
- ☐ How concentrated is the market?
- ☐ Which geographies create or destroy the search?
- ☐ Is the role written around a capability that barely exists?

Terra shortlist

For an early company, start by using the market-insight features inside your sourcing platform.

SeekOut Recruit Core includes talent-pool insights. More advanced SeekOut tiers add ATS rediscovery and broader market-intelligence capability on custom pricing.

Do not buy a large standalone talent-intelligence platform merely to create attractive charts. Buy it when market mapping is a repeated company capability.

09



Candidate experience

Candidate experience is mostly a process problem, not a software category.

The system should make it easy to:

- ☐ acknowledge applications
- ☐ explain the process
- ☐ schedule quickly
- ☐ keep candidates informed
- ☐ gather structured feedback promptly
- ☐ close loops respectfully
- ☐ present the company consistently

In small technical markets, reputation travels.

The person you reject this week may work beside the person you need next month.

Use your ATS careers page, templates and status workflows before adding another point solution.

10



AI-enabled recruiting tools

AI now appears inside almost every recruiting category.

That does not mean every use carries the same risk.

Good early uses

Use AI first where it removes administrative load while a human remains clearly responsible for the judgment:

- ☐ generating a first-pass sourcing query
- ☐ drafting personalised outreach for review
- ☐ summarising recruiter notes
- ☐ transcribing interviews with proper consent
- ☐ surfacing information already held in the ATS
- ☐ building reports
- ☐ rediscovering previous candidates for a recruiter to review

Higher-risk uses

Be more cautious where a system:

- ☐ ranks applicants
- ☐ scores interview performance
- ☐ decides who advances
- ☐ recommends rejection
- ☐ infers traits that were never directly assessed
- ☐ conducts autonomous screening at scale

EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS REMAIN SUBJECT TO DISCRIMINATION LAW

That applies even when software contributes to them. Some jurisdictions also impose specific rules on automated employment decision systems, including notice, record-keeping or bias-audit requirements.

Before deploying one:

- ☐ identify exactly which decision the system influences
- ☐ know what data it uses
- ☐ understand whether candidate data trains a model
- ☐ preserve meaningful human review
- ☐ provide required notices and consent
- ☐ test for adverse impact
- ☐ check every jurisdiction in which you hire
- ☐ involve employment counsel where the tool materially influences selection

Products worth evaluating

If you already use Ashby or Gem, start with the AI features embedded in the system you already govern.

If interview volume is the specific problem, BrightHire is a credible specialist to evaluate.

Do not build an “AI stack”. Add one capability when you can state exactly which human problem it solves.

11



Stack by company maturity

Founder-led hiring

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ one shared source of truth
- ☐ basic scheduling
- ☐ a way to reach people
- ☐ written interview evidence

PRACTICAL STACK

- ☐ Google Sheet or another simple shared database
- ☐ Calendly Standard if scheduling needs help
- ☐ LinkedIn Recruiter Lite or SeekOut Recruit Core only if you are doing enough outbound search to justify the spend
- ☐ bundled contact data first, Apollo only if enrichment is genuinely weak

WHAT TO SKIP

- ☐ enterprise ATS implementation
- ☐ specialist interview intelligence
- ☐ multiple sourcing subscriptions
- ☐ talent-intelligence platforms
- ☐ AI screening

A disciplined spreadsheet beats an expensive system nobody maintains.

First recruiter

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ a real ATS
- ☐ sourcing and CRM
- ☐ structured interview plans
- ☐ scheduling
- ☐ basic reporting
- ☐ reusable candidate history

Practical stack

Choose one system of record:

- ☐ Ashby Foundations
- ☐ Gem All-in-One
- ☐ Workable if simplicity and combined HR capability matter more than deeper recruiting workflow

Then add one serious sourcing layer if the ATS alone cannot map your markets:

- ☐ LinkedIn Recruiter Lite for lower-volume LinkedIn-centric hiring
- ☐ SeekOut Recruit Core for broader search and bundled contacts
- ☐ full LinkedIn Recruiter when network reach, ATS integration and sustained outbound volume justify the contract

WHAT TO SKIP

- ☐ two CRMs
- ☐ a second scheduling tool if the ATS works
- ☐ standalone analytics
- ☐ overlapping contact-data subscriptions

Scaling recruiting team

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ integrated ATS and CRM
- ☐ high-volume scheduling
- ☐ clean reporting
- ☐ talent rediscovery
- ☐ stronger market intelligence
- ☐ clear AI governance
- ☐ disciplined permissions and data retention

PRACTICAL STACK

- ☐ Ashby Plus or Gem at the appropriate company tier
- ☐ full LinkedIn Recruiter or an integrated SeekOut plan for continuous sourcing
- ☐ interview intelligence such as BrightHire only if interview quality and volume justify it
- ☐ specialist tools added only against a measurable bottleneck

At this stage, audit the stack every six months.

The most common scaling problem is not missing software. It is paying for the same capability twice.

12



Terra's default architecture

For most venture-backed climate and hard-tech companies, Terra would start with four principles.

01

1. One system of record

Pick the ATS and make it authoritative.

02

2. One serious sourcing layer

The talent graph matters more than a collection of browser extensions.

03

3. Enrichment only where the core systems fail

Test contact-data accuracy in your actual markets before paying for another subscription.

04

4. Add automation after the process works

Software amplifies the operating model you give it. A badly designed interview loop with more automation is simply a badly designed interview loop running faster.

KEY PRINCIPLE

The objective is not a
modern recruiting stack

The objective is a recruiting system that helps a small team find the right people,
remember what it learns and make better decisions with less administrative work.



Building a team for
something that has not been
built before?

Talk to Terra Talent.

Explore more Terra Talent resources [atterratalent.com/resources](https://terratalent.com/resources)

Developed by Terra Talent, May 2023. This 2026 edition is
substantially rebuilt.



[TERRATALENT.COM](https://terratalent.com)