Google™

HAYS

At a Glance

What they wanted to do
- Replace legacy search technology with a new system to enable consultants to quickly find the most relevant candidates, indexing 20 million documents and 33 countries
- Introduce a faster, more intuitive search to the Hays websites so that job seekers could find relevant roles more easily

What they did
- Introduced the GSA to all 33 countries and began using the GSA to power search on the Hays UK website, with a view to expanding this to all countries

What they accomplished
- Thousands of hours saved on training new consultants how to search for candidates, making them more productive
- Gave consultants the ability to search across structured and unstructured data to ensure the best candidates can be found more easily
- Made it simple for consultants to locate candidates outside of their own country for global roles
- Gained competitive edge through using GSA for innovative new projects such as LinkedIn integration
- Reduced IT management time by 90% compared to previous bespoke solution

GSA's lightning speed searches put Hays ahead of the pack in global recruitment industry

Business
Hays Recruitment is a leading global expert in qualified, professional and skilled recruitment. As a global agency, it specialises in helping clients to manage the challenges of simultaneously dealing with talent shortages in certain markets, while having to reshape workforces in others. The business has 7,800 staff in 245 offices across 33 countries and 20 specialisms, and has recently expanded to Chile, Colombia and Malaysia.

Challenge
As Hays looks to expand its international operation, it is vital it can place the best candidates, from across global markets.

"The recruitment industry is extremely competitive," explains Steve Weston, Group Technology Director, Hays. "Often, securing a role for a candidate will come down to getting selected CVs over to a client faster than a competitor."

"The GSA has fundamentally changed our business and capabilities. Its use is a core part of how we work and it has put us firmly ahead of our competitors, allowing us to provide the most advanced search technology in the recruitment industry." —Steve Weston, Group Technology Director

Until 2008, Hays was using a bespoke product it had developed internally for its candidate searches. The search function was complicated to use and could only search structured data organised in a format which the technology could process. Within a single country, there could be between 75-100 databases for different industries. This meant a notable delay between a candidate submitting their CV and it being available to Hays' recruitment consultants. With information siloed in different databases, searching across other countries' candidates was nearly impossible.

Consultants had to know the specific codes and formats that would find them their results, making training for new consultants and inputting searches very time-consuming. Hays receives 30,000 CVs a day that all have to be categorised into specific databases before the search tool could index them. Re-indexing the database was a lengthy process as all data had to be manually tagged, taking approximately 60 hours a week across a team of four people and creating a bottleneck for the search system at these times.

Solution
As search plays such a core role, replacing its existing search technology was a major decision for the business. Hays conducted thorough research and evaluation into enterprise search offerings, including products from Autonomy and Oracle. It selected the Google Search Appliance (GSA) as the best option for all its needs for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the GSA could integrate seamlessly with Bond Adapt, the complex recruitment database through which Hays manages all its data. The GSA's real-time indexing was also vital, giving recruitment consultants constant access to the most up-to-date CVs and job specifications. Furthermore, Hays wanted to be able to search both structured and unstructured data across its 20 million document archive, such as candidate CVs, which the GSA could easily do. Finally, the business was keen to provide a sophisticated, simple to use search function for the Hays website and found the GSA could also fulfil this need, while maintaining the look and feel of the Hays brand.

"We needed a search technology that would sit at the heart of our operation, was easy to use and would allow us to deliver a faster, more relevant service to our clients. The GSA ticked all these boxes, and because we knew Google would constantly be innovating and updating the product we were confident we were investing in something future-proof," explains Weston.

Benefits
Finding the most relevant candidates, faster
From the moment the GSA was first used, it had a significant impact on the speed and quality of results for every search. CVs are now automatically indexed instantly, meaning that the results coming through are based on the most up-to-date information, with all the latest candidates included. By removing the need for manual indexing, the IT team has been able to reduce the time it spends on search by 90%.

The introduction of unstructured search, where data does not need to be tagged to be indexed, has also meant search can be done faster. Whereas previously, the structured, isolated databases were the only means of finding the best match, now a single search across all candidates can be done easily.

In the UK alone, this has brought together the data of 2,000 consultants and 75 databases so consultants can search all candidates in a fraction of a second, as opposed to carrying out several searches on different databases. This means that there are far more opportunities to spot potential candidates who may not have appeared in a structured search.

"The fact that candidate searches can be done in a few seconds rather than minutes has been a real game-changer for our consultants. It has removed the pain of inputting codes to find the results they need, leaving them with time to secure more of the right candidates for their clients," explains Weston.

Federated search transforms global recruitment and underpins expansion
The GSA's capacity for federated search - the simultaneous retrieval of information across multiple appliances through a single search request – has had a dramatic impact on Hays' international offering. Thanks to this capability, it can now search across all candidates globally to find the right talent, even for highly specialised, global roles, which often carry the highest commissions. This is particularly important for global industries such as the oil and gas sector. For instance, for a client in New York, the Hays team could just as easily source a suitable candidate from the Middle East or the UK as it could from Washington DC.

The GSA 7.0, which Hays is now using, offers automatic translation using Google Translate. This helps to improve local language job search capabilities, translating CVs and job specifications automatically at lightning speed, and bolstering cross-country search. Hays' candidate sourcing office, based in India, is already translating CVs of candidates into the local language to identify prospective candidates for roles.

The ability to use the GSA for unstructured and federated search has led to a significant cultural shift across the business. Whereas previously there was a tendency to hoard the best candidates within specific databases, which only

select recruitment consultants would be searching, now the candidate database is completely open so no single recruitment agent 'owns' the candidates within it.

(Candidate details provided above are false and do not relate to Hays' candidates)

"Through the GSA, we've put ourselves at the cutting edge of the industry's ability to search and find candidates from a vast global talent pool. With its federated search offering, the GSA has played a key role in our ability to expand internationally in recent years, and will continue to do so in the future," comments Weston.

Enabling a young workforce to work the way they live
Despite its sophisticated capabilities, introducing the GSA internally was not a disruptive experience. Almost everyone is familiar with Google's consumer search from their personal lives and therefore understanding how to use it for candidate searches came naturally to the recruitment consultants. For this reason, new employees in Hays quickly become familiar with the search functionality and as a result Hays now saves thousands of training hours every year.

"With 80% of our staff being under the age of 30, we're mindful of their expectations of search technology. They're so used to finding the information they need instantly online that they can't understand if search technology in the workplace isn't as fast, feature-rich or easy to use. As the GSA is developed from Google's consumer search technology, it feels much more intuitive than other enterprise tools so we have easily met and exceeded these expectations," comments Weston.

Constant innovation
Since adopting the GSA, Hays has seen significant developments to the technology. User-friendly features such as query suggestions and 'search as

you type' help build a picture of the right candidates while dynamic clustering of search results into categories lets users drill into them by any value in any field. An insurance role, for example, can be clustered into salary bracket, region or seniority, quickly filtering out any irrelevant information.

Most recently, Google helped Hays to integrate LinkedIn into the GSA's search capabilities so that prospective candidates could be approached and targeted through this enormous database. Despite the complex nature of the project, using the GSA meant that it could be rolled out within a four-month time frame.

"The LinkedIn project was a real strategic coup for the business. It proved to us just how agile we can be by using the GSA. Through this integration, we're confident we've again put ourselves a step ahead of competitors," adds Weston.

Online search for Hays' websites
At any one time there are approximately 50,000 job specifications on the Hays global site, so making it easy to find the right ones is really important for job-seekers.

When overhauling its website, Hays intends to make use of the GSA's dynamic clustering, which offers a more effective, faster way of finding a role, helping candidates define priorities through a sidebar of filters. It is currently using Oracle Text Search, where several search boxes have to be filled in to find the best match. The GSA's filtering will provide a more intuitive, faster refinement. Hays has just rolled out the GSA on its UK and Ireland websites and as a result, bounce rates have decreased dramatically, meaning more people are now finding the jobs they need from the site. It is now looking to roll it out across all of its websites globally.

Conclusion
While the recruitment industry remains fiercely competitive, Hays is confident in its ability to thrive. A major factor is the company's use of the GSA, which allows it to quickly find the most relevant candidates through fast, open searches across multiple databases and countries, eliminating the previous segregated approach.

Commenting on the GSA's role in supporting the transformation of the business, Weston concludes, "The GSA has fundamentally changed our business and capabilities. Its use is a core part of how we work and it has put us firmly ahead of our competitors, allowing us to provide the most advanced search technology in the recruitment industry."