The Little Book of Bespoke Brilliance

Recruitment technology solutions that fit - because one-size doesn't always.

Bespoke Brilliance, By Design

At Harbour, we believe recruitment technology should fit the challenge - not the other way around.

Sometimes, an off-the-shelf solution gets the job done. But sometimes, businesses face unique challenges that demand something more.

This isn't just a book about systems - it's a collection of smart, human-first solutions crafted to help organisations hire faster, safer, and smarter.

From untangling high-volume hiring to building compliance-first processes, from clever one-offs to scalable automation, this is how a tailored approach can make a measurable difference - when done right.

Introduction

The Art of Building What is Needed,
Not Just What is Available

There's a saying in business that "good enough is the enemy of great."

But in the world of recruitment technology, "good enough" isn't merely the obstacle to excellence; it's often all that's on offer.

While companies strive for transformative talent acquisition, they're frequently left to choose between various shades of mediocrity in their tech solutions.

Did you know?

70% of Applicant Tracking Software (ATS) users report frustration with rigid, one-size-fits-all systems that fail to meet their unique needs.

For nearly two decades, Harbour has stood apart. We've sat at the crossroads of custom-built ingenuity and scalable efficiency, working with businesses that needed more than just another ATS.

We're problem solvers first, software providers second.

From day one, we've been unapologetically bespoke, designing deeply tailored solutions that solve real, complex recruitment challenges.

- Need to **track real-time induction completions** for safety-critical hires? We built that.
- Struggling with **union-driven compliance rules that block certain rehires**? We automated that.
- Running an **assessment centre where decisions need to be made live, on the ground, with minimal admin friction**? We created an iPad-based evaluation system for that - before most hiring tech even considered mobile usability.

We delivered true innovation, but for a long time, we were building too many one-off masterpieces - over 80 unique systems at our peak. Each solution was brilliant, but collectively, they became a commercial and operational challenge.

So, we evolved.

But our evolution wasn't about sacrificing the spark that made us different - that creative drive that produced some of our most brilliant solutions.

It was about being true to ourselves.

From Bespoke Chaos to Bespoke Brilliance

This book isn't a victory lap for the projects we've built.

It's a lesson in evolution. How Harbour refined its approach without losing its most valuable differentiator: **deep configurability.**

Instead of choosing between:
1. *"Fully bespoke, but impossible to scale"* **or**
2. *"Off-the-shelf, but clunky and inflexible"*

...we took a deliberate and strategic approach to offering two distinct solutions:

1. **A Multi-Tenant Platform** — A robust, cost-effective solution built for compliance-driven businesses that need configurability but also require cost realism and the reliability of a locked-down, scalable core.
2. **The Next Generation of Bespoke** — We weren't about to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of walking away from custom work, we evolved it. We created a tethered-single-tenant model that offered businesses a way to get the best of both worlds:

   • The power of Harbour's multi-tenant platform.
   • The ability to develop custom features that fit their exact needs.
   • A system where innovation flows both ways with bespoke builds feeding the core, and vice versa.

This means that every client benefits from Harbour's evolution, whether they need stability and efficiency or something boundary-pushing.

We can now offer Harbour brilliance to a broader audience without losing the innovative spirit that made us different in the first place.

Why This Matters Now

Recruitment is evolving. Fast.

There was a time when people used the phrase, "You don't get fired for buying IBM," highlighting how big companies thrived on reputation and reliability rather than innovation or value. **That thinking doesn't hold up anymore.**

New technologies like AI, automation, and platform-based hiring are reshaping the landscape.

But in the rush for efficiency, many businesses are sacrificing fit for speed, following the herd and simply choosing what everyone else is buying.

The companies that win in the long run **aren't the ones that buy the most widely used tech.** And in a world moving this fast, choosing a system that **forces compromise and workarounds** isn't just frustrating - it's a **career-limiting mistake.**

The businesses that thrive are the ones that demand tech that is built for their specific needs.

And that's what this book is about:
- ✔ Understanding why customisation doesn't have to mean chaos.
- ✔ Seeing how real businesses solved their most complex recruitment challenges.
- ✔ Learning how Harbour is bridging the gap between bespoke brilliance and scalable simplicity.

We've never been about just providing software.

We're about engineering the right solutions, for the right problems, at the right time.

Welcome to *The Little Book of Bespoke Brilliance*.

Let's get started.

1. Smart Compliance

Tech that Guarantees Governance in Hiring & Why It Matters More Than Ever

Hiring isn't just about finding the best talent. It's about finding the right talent within legal, ethical, and operational boundaries.

Some industries have compliance requirements baked into their DNA like healthcare, transport, financial services. Others are waking up to the growing risks of regulatory oversight, unconscious bias, and litigation exposure in hiring.

But here's the problem: **Most hiring technology isn't built for compliance-first recruitment.**

Many HR systems still rely on manual checks, disconnected spreadsheets, or compliance rules applied after the fact, slowing down hiring and creating risk at every stage.

At Harbour, we believe that compliance should be a seamless part of the recruitment process, not an afterthought.

▷ *This chapter explores distinct challenges real businesses have encountered in creating fair, safe, and regulation-proof hiring and how we built intelligent, automated, and foolproof solutions that ensured compliance didn't mean compromise.*

Case Study 1: Union-Driven Hiring Restrictions

The Challenge: Union Requirements & Candidate Fraud Prevention
One of the UK's largest transport operators had a unique compliance challenge:

- **Union agreements restricted reapplication periods** for certain safety critical roles. If a candidate had previously failed at a particular stage, they were barred from reapplying for a set period.
- **The exclusion period changed** depending on how far they got in the hiring process. An applicant rejected at the interview stage had a longer ban than an applicant who failed an early assessment.
- **Candidates were trying to bypass the rules.** Some used new email addresses or slightly different personal details to play the system and reapply before they were eligible.

This wasn't just a compliance headache. It was also an operational nightmare. Hiring teams were wasting time reprocessing ineligible applicants, and the company was at risk of union disputes and legal consequences.

The Harbour Solution: Automated Compliance & Smart Fraud Prevention

✔ Dynamic Exclusion Tracking
We created an intelligent system that allowed establishing exclusion periods based on the stage of rejection, ensuring that no candidate could slip through before they were eligible.

✔ Multi-Factor Applicant Identification

Instead of relying on email addresses (which are easy to change), Harbour's system cross-checked mobile numbers. A far harder-to-fake data point. This significantly reduced fraudulent reapplications.

✔ Seamless, Transparent Messaging

Rather than a generic rejection, ineligible candidates were given precise feedback on when they could legitimately reapply, as well as delivering clear messaging as-and-when they sought to re-apply within the excluded period. This removed confusion and prevented complaints.

The Impact

- **100% compliance** with union agreements, ensuring legal and ethical hiring.
- **Significant time saved**. Fewer manual checks, greater confidence in the applicant pool.
- **Reduced candidate fraud**. Smart detection made playing the system near impossible.

The Result? A hiring process that was compliant, efficient, and fair — well communicated and union compliant.

Case Study 2: Critical Day-One Compliance in High-Risk Roles

The Challenge: De-Risking Corporate Liability in Safety-Critical Hiring

For a business dealing with heavy machinery, hazardous environments, and legally mandated compliance training, hiring isn't just about finding the right person. It's about ensuring they are legally and operationally safe to start work from day one.

This geographically dispersed organisation, faced a major compliance risk:

- Their "graded" employees (salaried staff) had a structured onboarding process that ensured compliance was in place before day one.
- But for non-graded, blue-collar hires (typically manual workers), the process was paper-based, inconsistent, and highly risky.
- Crucial day-one compliance activities, site safety, legal sign-offs, and mandatory training were managed manually, meaning:
  - There was **no digital audit trail** to prove compliance had been met.
  - **Site-to-site variation** meant that machinery, and therefore induction requirements, were specific to a site. Some locations were better at enforcing induction protocol than others.
  - Corporate liability was sky-high if something went wrong, especially if someone had failed to complete paperwork or filed it incorrectly.

In short: **A single misstep in compliance could have cost big money in legal claims.**

**The Harbour Solution: Digital Induction & Compliance Automation
Two-Tiered Induction Process**
We built a system that recognised the distinct needs of graded vs. non-graded hires:

- **Graded employees** followed a structured onboarding process that balanced line manager guidance with central oversight, enabling them to add value to the business significantly faster than before.
- **Non-graded workers** followed a digitally managed, site-specific induction, ensuring critical compliance training was met before they even stepped onto site.

✔ Mandatory Compliance Workflows

- The system enforced critical pre-start safety training. Employees could not be officially recorded as "started" until they had completed the digitised compliance steps and attained appropriate scores in some aspects — signed off by the inductor AND the site manager.
- Site managers were automatically notified of new starters and any outstanding compliance requirements at the end of day-one.

✔ Real-Time Digital Sign-Off & Audit Trail

- No more paper trails. Everything was logged digitally, providing a legally provable compliance record.
- Live compliance dashboards meant that HR, site managers, and compliance teams had a real-time view of induction completion rates.

The Impact

- **Transformed corporate compliance liability.** Moving from manual, risky processes to provable digital records.
- **Every new hire met critical safety requirements before stepping onto site - guaranteed.**
- **Ensured induction tasks that weren't classed as 'day-one critical' weren't forgotten about**, but rather automatically followed up to ensure compliance within 30 days.
- **Huge efficiency savings.** HR and site teams spent far less time chasing compliance tasks.

The Result? A safer and better protected workforce with incredible efficiency and peace-of-mind gains — for new starters, local managers and the company Health & Safety Team in regards to corporate de-risking.

Case Study 3: Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Challenge: Fair Hiring Without Bias

Very early on in HABOUR history a well-known UK charity had a commitment to inclusive hiring. They wanted to ensure disabled applicants who met minimum role requirements were guaranteed an interview.

But there were two key challenges:

- Hiring managers needed to review applications fairly, without unconscious bias.
- Some candidates required interview adjustments, but disclosing this at the wrong time could influence hiring decisions.

The Harbour Solution: Intelligent DEI-First Forms

✔ Automated Interview Guarantees

Candidates who met pre-defined criteria were automatically flagged for interview, removing the risk of human bias filtering them out.

✔ **Anonymous Adjustment Requests**

The system separated adjustment requests from candidate profiles, ensuring that hiring managers were informed only about necessary accommodations, without access to personal details.

✔ **Anonymised Shortlisting**

The system automatically redacted identifying details in early-stage application reviews, ensuring that candidates were evaluated purely on merit before their identities were revealed

The Impact

- **A bias-free shortlisting process** that guaranteed interview commitments were met fairly.
- **Increased hiring manager confidence** by ensuring fair and informed decisions aligned with DEI policy.
- **Positive brand impact**. By hiring in this way, the charity was truly leading by example.

The Result? With this system in place, the charity was able to strengthen its commitment to inclusive hiring without compromising fairness or process integrity.

Key Takeaways from Smart Compliance

Compliance should be built-in, not bolted on.
When compliance is automated into the hiring process, businesses don't just avoid risk, they hire smarter and faster.

Fair hiring is good hiring.
Whether it's union rules, DEI commitments, or legal restrictions, recruitment systems must balance compliance and efficiency.

Tech prevents fraud & bias - when done right!
Harbour's compliance-first approach doesn't just automate, it intelligently enhances hiring, reducing bias, errors, and risk.

Compliance Doesn't Have to Mean a Bad Candidate Experience
Regulatory requirements **exist for the right reasons**, but that doesn't mean hiring should feel like an obstacle course. By designing **seamless, engaging, and transparent** processes, compliance can be met **without friction**, ensuring **the best candidates stay engaged rather than drop out**. Smart tech **guides** rather than **blocks**, making compliance a **positive, not punitive, part of hiring.**

2. Experience-Led Recruitment

Putting Candidates First: The Candidate Experience Illusion — Where It All Goes Wrong

In the world of recruitment, "candidate experience" is the easiest lip service to pay.

Millions are poured into slick employer branding, careers websites, and social media campaigns to attract talent. Companies obsess over their Glassdoor ratings, diversity statements, and corporate culture messaging.

But when a candidate clicks **"apply"?**
▷ **They get bounced from a jobsite to another "register to apply" page.**
▷ **They're met with an arduous and clunky application form.**
▷ **They submit their details and hear...nothing.**

The hiring experience is where most businesses completely drop the ball.

The reality? Candidate experience isn't just a marketing buzzword. It's a process problem. All the employer branding in the world won't fix a slow, frustrating, and inconsistent hiring journey.

At Harbour, we don't just make hiring smoother for HR teams. We ensure candidates feel valued and engaged from application to onboarding because a frustrating hiring process damages employer branding, and ultimately impacts product and business perception. It's a completely avoidable loss.

▷ *This chapter showcases how we've helped businesses go beyond the branding to deliver seamless, efficient, and engaging hiring experiences that keep candidates feeling respected, informed, and excited about their new role.*

Case Study 1: New Joiner Engagement through Induction Planning

The Challenge: A Broken New Joiner Experience
- A large Housing Association had a well-structured Harbour ATS and recruitment process, but a **critical gap** between offer acceptance and start date.
- Hiring managers all too often failed to take **responsibility** for preparing a structured onboarding process, leading to last-minute scrambling and the risk of day-one disengagement.

The Harbour Solution: Structured Induction Planning with Automation

✔ **Hiring Manager Tasking & Induction Scheduling**
- Once a new hire accepted a contract with a start date, hiring managers were automatically prompted to schedule a structured induction plan using a library of predefined must-have activities (onboarding meetings, training, role-specific sessions).
- Customisation was possible, but mandatory elements were enforced to ensure consistency.

✔ Pre-Day-One Candidate Portal

- New hires were given early access to their induction journey via the onboarding portal, with automated alerts driving them back to review it.
- Through the portal, they could:
  - View & download their full induction plan before Day One.
  - Receive personalised welcome messages, including a Head of Department introduction.

✔ Automated Hiring Manager Accountability

- The system flagged incomplete induction plans, ensuring hiring managers took responsibility for preparing for new starters.
- Through system automation, IT was prompted to set up email accounts prior to a new starter's first day. These accounts were then loaded onto the onboarding portal, auto-generating calendar invites for induction activities directly into the new starter's work calendar.

The Impact

- ⚡ **Increased pre-Day-One engagement**, reducing the amount of dropouts & no-shows.
- ⚡ **Hiring managers were held accountable**, ensuring structured onboarding.
- ⚡ **New hires arrived prepared**, making their transition into the business faster and smoother.

The Result? Where most businesses fall short is viewing induction as something a Line Manager just gets on with. In reality, it's a crucial engagement phase that sets the tone for retention, productivity, and consistent employer brand perception.

Case Study 2: Graduate & Early Careers Preboarding in Law

The Challenge: A Two-Year Black Hole Between Offer & Start Date

- Law firms offer roles to graduate trainees years in advance, creating a long and vulnerable gap where engagement may drop.
- Candidates had no structured touchpoints, leading to drop-offs and uncertainty. Success or failure in this was very manual.
- Firms need to keep future trainees engaged and ensure they transitioned smoothly into full-time roles given the significant time and resources invested in attracting top talent.

The Harbour Solution: Long-Term Engagement & Keep-in-Touch Portals

✔ **Offer-to-Start Engagement Plan**
- A structured candidate communication timeline was created, ensuring:
  - Future trainees received updates and felt part of the firm before they even arrived.
  - The firm could share insights, business updates, and networking opportunities.

✔ **Integrated "Keep-in-Touch" Portal**
- Candidates could log in at any time to:
  - Access firm news, preboarding tasks, and key updates.
  - Sign up for face-to-face engagement sessions, webinars, and events.

✔ **Smooth Transition to Full-Time Employment**
- Instead of repeating the onboarding process, key details were retained and updated, saving time and making the ultimate hiring frictionless.

The Impact

- **Future hires felt connected to the business**, improving retention and engagement.
- **Drop-offs decreased**, as candidates saw value in staying committed to their offer and were kept abreast of the firm's success story.
- **Recruitment/HR teams saved time and effort** as onboarding was pre-prepared. Business updates could be effortlessly shared and events easily scheduled, significantly reducing admin workload.

The Result? Employer brand doesn't matter if people don't stick around long enough to experience it — and tools that help connect people and make them feel part of an organisation, even before joining, have a hugely positive impact.

Case Study 3: In-Store Hiring Efficiency for High-Volume Roles

The Challenge: A Disjointed Retail Hiring Experience

- Store managers were time-poor and needed a fast, structured way to process walk-ins alongside online applications.
- Hiring processes varied from store to store, leading to missed candidates, delays, and an inconsistent experience. This was damaging to brand reputation.
- Managers lacked visibility on where candidates were in the process, causing bottlenecks and inefficiencies.

The Harbour Solution: Retail Hiring Portal & Seamless Candidate Tracking

✔ **Tablet-Based Walk-In Candidate Capture**
- Store managers could log walk-in applicants in seconds using an iPad-based portal.

- Candidates could scan their CVs, indicate shift availability, and complete key details on the spot, eliminating manual data entry.

✔ **One-Click Interview Scheduling & Tracking**
- Managers could schedule interviews instantly, whether for walk-ins or online applicants, cutting unnecessary admin delays.
- The system provided full process visibility, ensuring no candidate was lost or stuck in limbo.

✔ **Real-Time Hiring Transparency**
- Managers and HR had **instant oversight** of:
  - Who was in the pipeline
  - Who had been offered & start dates
  - What outstanding actions remained

The Impact
- **Reduced hiring time.** Store managers processed candidates' days faster.
- **More structured hiring decisions.** Candidates were tracked properly, eliminating lost or forgotten applicants.
- **Improved employer brand.** Both walk-in and online applicants experienced a professional, structured process.

The Result? High-volume hiring needs structure just as much as corporate recruitment. Interacting with more candidates means a greater brand impact, positive or negative. Every applicant experience shapes how they see your business, not just as an employer, but as a brand they choose to buy from.

Key Takeaways from Experience-Led Recruitment

Candidate experience is more than a careers website.
If the **application process is slow, clunky, or unresponsive,** your **employer and product brand investment is wasted.**

Preboarding is where most businesses fail. Induction matters just as much.
Keeping candidates engaged **between offer and start date** reduces drop-offs and builds loyalty, **especially when onboarding isn't left to a Line Manager's availability (or lack of it).**

Hiring managers need to be equipped, not left guessing.
A great candidate experience **doesn't happen by accident**, it needs **structure, automation, and accountability.**

Move fast - and don't ghost.
Speed matters - top candidates won't wait. But treating people well matters more. Put yourself in their shoes: silence stings. The right tech lets you respond fast and with empathy, whether it's good news or not. Because respect in hiring isn't optional - it's your brand on show.

3. Intelligent Automation

Making Hiring Smarter, Not Harder - The Myth of Recruitment Automation

Recruitment automation has a **bad reputation.**

We've all seen it:
- ✕ **Cold, robotic hiring processes.**
- ✕ **Unintelligent auto-rejections.**
- ✕ **Workflow automations that create more admin, not less.**

The problem isn't automation itself. It's **bad automation** - the kind that replaces human judgment instead of enhancing it.

At Harbour, we believe that **automation should do one thing**: **remove friction.**
- It should **eliminate bottlenecks** so people can make decisions faster.
- It should **hold teams accountable** so nothing slips through the cracks.
- It should **speed up hiring, not make it more rigid.**

▷ *This chapter explores how we've built automation that works, making hiring faster, smarter, and more structured without sacrificing human intelligence.*

Case Study 1: Intelligent Onboarding & Full Accountability in High Compliance Hiring

The Challenge: Digitising Onboarding Wasn't Enough

A high-compliance organisation, like one of the largest private Healthcare providers in the UK, can't afford gaps in its hiring process.

- Healthcare roles are heavily regulated. Every new hire needs multiple checks, sign-offs, and compliance clearances before they can start.
- Before Harbour, the process was paper-based, slow, and prone to delays, with files physically stored under desks and tracking done on spreadsheets.
- When we digitised the process, it massively improved efficiency, but it uncovered a deeper issue:
  - The dedicated team were still locked in the pre-digitised mentality, effectively processing onboarding at their own pace.
  - Tasks weren't being actioned anywhere as close to as swiftly as they could or should have been, meaning poor candidate experience as well as business impact.
  - Hiring teams lacked visibility over what was done and what was still outstanding.

This wasn't just a minor delay. In healthcare hiring, every day counts. Every delay in hiring means another agency staff member is being paid to fill the gap, adding huge financial costs or extra stress on the existing team covering additional shifts

The Harbour Solution: Structured Onboarding Oversight & No Room for Delay

✔ **Automated Task Visibility & Live Updates**
- Every onboarding task is already tracked, showing exactly who had completed what, and when.
- Now if a profile update was made, the assigned onboarding owner was aware on a bespoke dashboard, ensuring no process step or action taken or required was missed.

✔ **Accountability-Driven Processing**
- The system required teams to acknowledge every completed action, whether requiring a follow up action or not (which was also called out, of course!) meaning new hires, or hard pressed teams, weren't just left hanging.
- Hiring managers and HR teams were given clear time expectations and top level oversight, making it obvious if anyone was holding-up progress.

✔ **Red & Green Status Tracking**
- The system introduced **automated red/green flagging** to show:
  - **When a process was overdue or stuck.**
  - **When a process was moving smoothly.**
- If something wasn't actioned within the required timeframe, **it triggered a clear alert** (in system and email).

✔ **Complete Transparency on Performance**
- Harbour tracked response times, processing efficiency, and delays, creating full visibility over:
  - Who was completing tasks **quickly and correctly**.
  - Where **the bottlenecks** were.
  - **Who wasn't keeping up**, ensuring accountability.

The Impact

- **Faster, more structured onboarding**. Reducing onboarding from weeks to days, and processing actions from days to hours.
- **Massive financial savings**, by reducing the time spent relying on agency staff.
- **Full transparency over onboarding performance**, preventing hidden bottlenecks.

The Result? Automation isn't just about digitising processes. It's about ensuring those processes are actually being followed efficiently with actionable call-outs and auditable accountability.

Case Study 2: Automating Reference Checking Capture

The Challenge: Slow, Repetitive Reference Checks with Wrong Data

- This client's recruitment team spent countless hours manually verifying reference details, often correcting candidate referee submissions for the largest regional employers.
- Reference checks were slow, admin-heavy, and prone to duplication.
- Corporate references details were stored in an unstructured way, meaning recruiters often chased their tails when they could have known better.

The Harbour Solution: A Smart, Centralised Reference Database

✔ **Reference Storage & Reuse**
  - Build a secure in-system reference database that allowed approved referee contact details to be stored and reused.
  - If a candidate had worked at a 'known' referee, then the facility instantly retrieve the correct details instead of them inputting their best guess of who to contact.

✔ **Automated Reference Requests**
- Created pre-configured reference request workflows, removing the manual back-and-forth between HR teams and referees.
- The system automatically triggered reminders to referees if responses weren't received on time.

✔ **Flagging Reference Fails Early**
- Recruiters and the candidate were automatically alerted where a reference failed to respond within an agreed timeframe...with chasers built in.

The Impact

- **Massive time savings**. The Recruitment team reduced reference processing time by over 50%.
- **Fewer compliance risks**, with a clear audit trail of the process taken to obtain these key parts of the onboarding process.
- **Better candidate experience**. No unnecessary delays to start dates due to failed or lost checks.

The Result? Automation should speed up decision-making, not necessarily replace it — but done well it can truly supercharge the entire hiring journey, saving time, money and countless headaches.

Case Study 3: Smarter Communication Between Recruiters & Agencies

The Challenge: Disjointed Hiring Agency Communication

- This client's recruitment team worked with multiple external agencies, but the process was unstructured and manually laborious.
- Agencies often had inconsistent access to role details, changing job specs, and shifting candidate requirements.
- Communication happened across scattered emails, phone calls, and spreadsheets, creating frustration and inefficiencies.

The Harbour Solution: A Centralised Agency Collaboration Portal

✔ **Single Source of Truth**

- Built a dedicated agency portal where external recruiters could access live job specs, update candidate submissions, and track progress.

✔ **Automated Updates & Notifications**

- Agencies were automatically notified of role changes, preventing outdated submissions.
- Group briefings could be scheduled directly in the system, cutting out endless email chains.

✔ **Real-Time Status Tracking**

- Agencies could see live updates on their submitted candidates, reducing unnecessary queries.
- Internal recruiters had a clear view of agency activity, improving accountability.

The Impact

- **Faster, clearer communication.** Agencies worked more efficiently with fewer errors and able to submit more appropriate candidates.
- **Less recruiter admin.** No more endless emails or chasing updates.
- **Better talent pipeline management.** Recruiters had full visibility over agency performance.

The Result? Automation doesn't just apply to candidates, it's just as important for streamlining recruiter workflows — full consideration of your entire recruitment eco-system ensures optimal outcomes for all parties.

Key Takeaways from Intelligent Automation

Automation should remove friction, not necessarily remove human decision-making.
The goal is efficiency, not just process for process's sake.

Hiring teams waste too much time on repetitive admin.
Smart automation eliminates duplication, speeds up hiring, and keeps things moving.

Automation is just as valuable for recruiters as it is for candidates.
Reference checks, agency management, talent pipelining. All of these can be automated without losing control.

Automation enhances human oversight, it doesn't replace it.
The best automation **doesn't just digitise processes. It ensures they're actually followed, flagging gaps and keeping teams accountable.**

4. High-Volume & Event-Based Hiring

Why It's Often Poor & Sometimes Just Broken

Hiring at scale is a completely different beast from traditional recruitment.

- ✔ Retail chains need to hire hundreds of seasonal staff. Fast.
- ✔ Graduate schemes process thousands of applications for limited spaces.
- ✔ Assessment centres need real-time decision-making, not paperwork delays.

Yet, in most companies, **high-volume hiring is a logistical mess**:

- ✗ **Too much manual tracking** spread across spreadsheets, emails, and inconsistent workflows.
- ✗ **Managers drowning in admin** and losing track of where candidates are in the process.
- ✗ **Candidates left in the dark**, leading to dropouts (often of the best candidates) and frustrated internal applicants.

▷ *This chapter shows how over the years, for a number of our clients, Harbour has transformed high-volume hiring, turning it from a chaotic, admin-heavy struggle into a structured, frictionless process.*

Case Study 1: Real-Time Hiring Decisions in Assessment Centres

The Challenge: High-Energy, High-Volume Hiring in a Fast-Paced Environment

A rapidly expanding retail coffee brand was opening stores at an aggressive pace and hiring needed to be fast, but structured.

- Assessment centres were the most efficient way to process bulk hiring, but recruiters were swamped with the volume assessment centres and processing paper-based scoring sheets.
- Decisions were delayed, candidates lost momentum, and the experience felt disorganised.

The Harbour Solution: A Real-Time Digital Hiring Event Platform

✔ **Tablet-Based Live Candidate Processing**
- At the event, assessors logged into a tablet-based system, which displayed a live list of all attendees and allowed them to update candidate performance in real-time.
- The recruiter could even take a photo of attendees to make it easier to remember who-was-who after the event, as well as capturing Right to Work and Proof Of Address documents to speed up onboarding for those who were successful.

✔ **Instant Score Input & Auto-Ranking**
- Each task was scored live on the system, based on their very on-brand scorecard, with instant candidate ranking. No paper delays, no manual scoring errors.

✔ **Seamless Interview Scheduling on the Spot**

- If a candidate passed the group assessment, assessors could immediately book their final interview. No back-and-forth admin.

✔ **Automated Follow-Ups & Candidate Updates**

- Candidates who were successful received instant updates, while those who didn't make it were placed in a structured talent pool for future roles or sent an appropriately nice message that was slightly time-delayed to be extra considerate.

The Impact

- **Massive time savings**. Recruiters could make instant decisions with in-system actioning in real-time.
- **Better candidate experience** with clear, structured updates with no frustrating delays.
- **Eliminated lost candidates**. No more paper trails leading to hiring bottlenecks and faster onboarding.

The Result? The faster and more structured an assessment centre is, the better the candidate experience and hiring outcomes. Literal win-win.

Case Study 2: Gamifying Talent Attraction Before It Was a Thing

The Challenge: How Do You Stand Out at a Graduate Fair?

Back in 2010, long before "digital hiring experiences" were even a conversation, our client wanted to engage graduates in a way that was fun, memorable, and useful for their hiring process.

The problem?

- Handing out flyers wasn't enough.
- They needed a way to capture candidate data effectively without it feeling like an admin task.

The Harbour Solution: A Digital Game That Captured Data Seamlessly

✔ Built a two-minute interactive game on an iPad, designed to challenge graduates in a way that aligned with the company's values.

✔ **Live data capture**. Candidates who played the game were automatically logged into the ATS for follow-ups.

✔ **Post-event automation.** Everyone who played received a personalised follow-up email and, if they later applied, the system tracked them back to the event as the source which helpws give valuable insight regarding R.O.I.

The Impact

- **Increased candidate engagement**. People were talking about the client long after the event.
- **Seamless integration from attraction to application**. A marketing initiative that wasn't just for show but drove measurable recruitment outcomes.
- **Way ahead of its time**. This was before most companies were even thinking about gamification in hiring.

The Result? From the get-go, Harbour doesn't just build systems. We create solutions that connect hiring with the real world and real people.

Case Study 3: Automating Psychometric Testing for Graduate Hiring

The Challenge: Creating a Consistent Graduate Selection Process

A major construction firm needed a structured, repeatable, and fair graduate recruitment process.

- Graduate hiring is highly competitive, with thousands of applications for a handful of roles.
- The company had paid for a psychometric test to be created to meet their needs to assess candidates, but the process was difficult to administrate in its offline format (this was 2018 and that was just how it was back then).

The Harbour Solution: Automated, Randomised Psychometric Testing

✔ **System-Driven Fairness & Consistency**
- We built the entire testing process as a fully integrated aspect of the recruitment system, or at least the graduate workflow aspect of the system, ensuring every candidate took the same structured assessment.

✔ **Randomised Answer Orders**
- To prevent candidates from playing the system and increase fairness, answer orders were randomised for every applicant, ensuring genuine performance.

✔ **Autoscoring & Shortlisting**
- The system instantly processed scores and helped filter candidates based on clear criteria, reducing significant manual effort for recruiters.

The Impact

- **A fair, structured hiring process** that eliminated bias and inconsistency.
- **Massive recruiter time savings**, with efficient shortlisting.
- **Better candidate trust**, knowing they were assessed consistently.

The Result? If a hiring process isn't considered and structured, it's all the more likely to be all the more prone to bias. Automation helps ensure fairness at scale.

Key Takeaways from High-Volume & Event-Based Hiring

↩ High-volume hiring is only high-quality when it's organised.

Without structure, high-volume recruitment becomes chaos. Process, tech, and accountability are critical to delivering consistency, fairness, and speed.

↩ Candidate experience still matters - even at scale.

Whether it's 10 hires or 10,000, how you treat each candidate leaves a lasting impression on your employer brand.

↩ Manual admin doesn't scale - but smart automation does.

Removing friction for hiring teams unlocks capacity, reduces bottlenecks, and keeps hiring pipelines moving faster.

↩ Events and campaigns deserve more than spreadsheets.

From assessment centres to careers fairs, tech that adapts to event-based hiring creates competitive advantage and memorable candidate engagement.

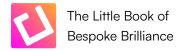# 5. Beyond Coordinates: Solving Location-Led Business & Candidate Challenges

Location is rarely just a map pin.

For candidates, it's the filter that shapes life balance decisions. For businesses, it can be a compliance issue, a risk factor, an operational hurdle, or even a duty of care responsibility.

From supporting a regional airport as it became a unified hiring hub for dozens of independent businesses, to enabling a multi-brand social care provider to protect sensitive locations while safeguarding recruitment compliance, to building real-time tracking and authorisation tools for global business travel - Harbour has consistently solved location-led challenges that others often overlook or else aren't equipped to solve.

Because this isn't just about "where."

▷ *In this chapter we dip into how location influences recruitment, onboarding, duty of care, and operational resilience - and how technology, when applied with precision, can make the entire experience safer, smoother, and more human.*

Case Study 1: Two Distinct Approaches to Safer Recruitment & a Bunch of Brands

The Challenge: Multi-Brand Hiring with Complex Compliance Requirements

A fast-growing, acquisition hungry **social care provider** needed a recruitment system that could balance **local brand individuality** with **group-wide hiring efficiency** - all while meeting strict **compliance and safeguarding regulations**.

Unlike centralised organizations with a singular hiring identity, this business operated across **multiple locally distinct brands**, each with its own reputation and recognition within the community. This created a **unique recruitment challenge:**

✔ **Brand Distinction Within a Group-Wide ATS**
Each brand needed its **own unique identity** - logos, job templates, and location information - while still benefiting from the efficiency of a **centralised** hiring platform.

✔ **Dual-Regulatory Hiring Compliance**
Operating across **both adult care (CQC-regulated) and children's care (Ofsted-regulated) services** meant hiring processes had to be slightly but crucially different **depending on the role's regulatory framework.**

✔ **Sensitive Hiring Locations & Secure Application Workflows**
For roles in children's care homes, **location details needed to be hidden** from applicants until they passed an initial screening stage, ensuring safer recruitment without impacting efficiency.

✔ **Smarter Job Search & Location-Based Filtering**
Given the need for **regional hiring, commuting distance awareness**, and **hybrid/remote roles**, the organization required an **intelligent job search function** that could **flex for different working models**.

The Harbour Solution: A Highly Configurable, Compliance-First ATS
Harbour developed a **recruitment system tailored to multi-brand, compliance-driven hiring**, ensuring seamless **scalability**, **safeguarding**, and optimising **candidate experience**.

✔ **Multi-Brand Configurability**
- Each brand retained **distinct employer branding** while being powered by a **centralised ATS.**
- **Logos, job templates, and location preferences** were customisable per brand—ensuring **local authenticity** while maintaining **group-wide hiring efficiency**.

✔ **Regulation-Specific Workflows**
- The system supported **distinct hiring processes** for **CQC-regulated adult care** roles vs. **Ofsted-regulated children's care** roles.
- Regulatory compliance was embedded into the ATS - **ensuring mandatory safeguarding checks** were completed before **candidates progressed** or **onboarding was signed off**.

✔ **Secure & Staged Application Process**
- For childcare roles, **applicants could not see the exact location** until **pre-screening** was completed.
- Validating **full applications before site visits** significantly reduced risk—ensuring safer recruitment **without impacting candidate experience**.

✔ **Google Maps Integration & Intelligent Job Search**
- Job seekers could **filter vacancies based on radial distance to their location -** evaluating transport options via **direct Google Maps links**.
- For **secure locations**, a **polygon-based search** was used - ensuring **sensitive sites** were never **publicly disclosed**.
- Regional and **fully remote roles** were also **intelligently mapped**, providing **greater clarity for candidates** looking for flexible work.

The Impact

- **Localized Hiring, Group-Level Efficiency** — Each brand **retained its local identity,** while recruitment processes **benefited from group-wide intelligence** and **operational efficiency.**
- **Enhanced Compliance & Safeguarding** — Regulatory requirements were **met in full,** ensuring **safer recruitment** while **streamlining workflows** for hiring teams.
- **Better Candidate Experience — Smart job search capabilities** meant candidates could find **the right roles** while ensuring **sensitive data** was protected throughout the hiring process.

The Result? This wasn't just an ATS - it was a compliance-first, candidate-first hiring engine designed to balance local brand individuality, regulatory obligations, and hiring efficiency without compromise.

Case Study 2: When a Brand is the Sum of Very Distinct Parts

The Challenge: Centralising Hiring for a Multi-Employer Environment
An Airport operates in a unique hiring ecosystem. While its direct headcount is modest, hundreds of businesses operate within the airport - from baggage handling and security to retail, hospitality, and transport services.
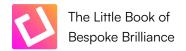
This created a major recruitment challenge:

- **Candidates searching for "Airport jobs" in the locality had no clear destination** - each employer had its own approach to recruiting, meaning job seekers had to search multiple sites to find relevant roles.
- **Smaller businesses lacked a structured hiring process** - many relied on email-based applications or in-person drop-offs, leading to inefficiencies and poor candidate experience.
- **Larger employers needed a streamlined way to promote their airport-based vacancies** without duplicating job advertising efforts.

The goal wasn't just to provide an applicant tracking system (ATS) for the airport management company itself, but to create a structured, unified hiring hub - giving all airport businesses a platform to promote roles while maintaining their own processes.

The HARBOUR Solution: A Dual-Purpose ATS & Hiring Hub

✔ **Multi-Tiered Job Posting & Application Processing**
  - Created an **airport-wide job portal**, allowing candidates to search for all roles linked to the airport, regardless of the employer.

- **Larger businesses** with their own ATS could provide an automated job feed - or Harbour built a job scrape function to pull in relevant vacancies from their career sites.
- **Smaller businesses** without an ATS were provided with an **"ATS Lite" solution**, allowing them to post roles, manage applications, and communicate with candidates through a simple interface.

✔ **Integrated Compliance & Onboarding**
- Harbour's full ATS, onboarding, and background check processing was deployed for the Airport's directly employed roles, ensuring compliance for security-sensitive positions.
- System included DBS, right-to-work and reference tracking, essential for regulated airport positions — as well as HRMS integration.

✔ **Seamless Candidate Experience**
- **Single source of truth** for candidates looking for Airport jobs - eliminating the confusion of multiple career sites.
- **Structured focal point** for all employers recruiting, improving response rates and reducing drop-offs.

The Impact
- **Created the first-ever centralised job hub for the Airport**, vastly improving recruitment efficiency across multiple businesses.
- **Streamlined hiring for smaller businesses**, giving them structured tools to advertise and process applications professionally.
- **Improved employer branding and candidate experience** - job seekers could now explore all airport-related vacancies in one place.
- **Increased application flow** for all employers - candidates could seamlessly apply for multiple roles in one search session.

The Result? This wasn't just an ATS - it was a strategic workforce solution, bridging the gap between independent employers while enhancing candidate experience at every touchpoint.

Case Study 3: Travel Facilitation with Above & Beyond Duty of Care

The Challenge: Managing Travel & Duty of Care Without a Clear, Centralised System

Having seen the success of the authorisation aspect of the delivered ATS, the client came at us with a new challenge:

"Travel bookings, hotel stays, and travel requests are essentially just authorisation steps. Can we apply the same logic to build a system for that?"

But this wasn't just about **approving trips**. As we peeled back the layers of the requirement, they ideally needed a solution that:

- Allowed colleagues to **request travel, accommodation, and approvals** in a structured way.
- Ensured that **different levels of authorisation** were required depending on the length and cost of the trip.
- Provided **complete visibility** for the dedicated travel team to track who was traveling, where they were staying, and what bookings had been made.
- Maintained a **real-time record of travel activity**, so if there was a disruption, crisis, or issue, they could quickly assess who was affected.
- Keep colleague's **key travel documentation data** to facilitate the smoothest of booking experience when it came to international travel.

At the time, this was a highly manual process, relying on disconnected spreadsheets, emails, and internal approvals that lacked auditability and real-time visibility.

The Harbour Solution: Intelligent Travel Automation & Real-Time Tracking

Harbour built a bespoke travel request and approval system that operated independently from the ATS but **leveraged the same intelligent automation principles**.

✔ **Automated Approval Workflows**
- Colleagues submitted travel requests through a structured online form.
- Depending on the length, cost, and purpose of the trip, the system determined the approval threshold (e.g., a local overnight stay required a lower level of approval than a six-month international secondment).
- Approvers were automatically notified and chased until sign-off was secured.

✔ **Real-Time Travel Data & Duty of Care Compliance**
- All approved travel was recorded in a central system, giving the travel team full oversight of who was traveling, where, and when.
- A Google Maps-based interface displayed active travel records which allowed the travel team to see, at a glance, who was in which location on which dates.
- If unexpected travel disruptions occurred, such as a flight ban due to volcanic ash or a train strike, the team could instantly assess which employees were affected and take action.

✔ **Integrated Travel Information Management**
- Colleagues were required to upload essential documents (e.g., passport details, visa requirements) as part of the request process, but only if they were seeking international travel.
- The system flagged missing or invalid/expired information before bookings were made, ensuring no last-minute surprises like a colleague being unable to travel due to an expired passport.

✔ **Corporate Rate Tracking & Cost Efficiency**
- The client had agreements with certain hotel chains, offering negotiated rates.
- Harbour built a cost tracking interface that showed average booking prices, frequency of bookings, and adherence to corporate rate agreements, allowing the travel team to monitor compliance with vendor deals.

The Impact

- **From Reactive to Proactive:** Instead of scrambling when travel disruptions occurred, the client had a clear, real-time view of who was where, allowing them to act before an issue became a crisis.
- **Increased Travel Oversight & Cost Control:** Travel spend is fully trackable, ensuring budget controls and corporate rate adherence.
- **Reduced Risk & Compliance Failures:** Missing documentation issues (passports, visas) were flagged before travel was booked, preventing costly mistakes.
- **A Single Source of Truth:** Instead of relying on scattered spreadsheets, the client now has one place to manage all travel-related approvals and tracking.

Why This Was a Game-Changer: Many organisations struggle with duty of care responsibilities when employees travel, particularly when unexpected disruptions occur. By implementing real-time tracking, approval automation, and proactive issue flagging, the client turned a disjointed, manual process into a structured, compliance-first system that provided clarity, efficiency, and true peace of mind.

This was not a standard recruitment solution, but Harbour's ability to adapt its intelligent automation to other business-critical processes showed just how much further the technology could go.

The Result? This isn't just travel-tracking. This is intelligent governance, expense management and corporate risk management all in one. And it's been running since 2014

Key Takeaways from Solving Location-Led Business & Candidate Challenges

Sometimes a great hiring experience means thinking bigger.
Candidate-first recruitment isn't just about your structure or your processes or even you — it's about how people search for work in an industry, location, or even the search terms they might use. Businesses that broaden their perspective to improve the wider candidate journey don't just attract better talent - they enhance brand and reputation across the board.

Location data isn't just about logistics - it's about compliance and care.
From safeguarding-sensitive recruitment to duty-of-care travel systems, businesses need tech that handles location data intelligently and ethically.

Better location tech leads to better business outcomes.
When you solve the location challenge - whether that's surfacing the right jobs to candidates, or ensuring safer recruitment - you create stronger, more resilient operations.

Think beyond your postcode.
Whether you're hiring for one site or many, or sending people around the world, smart location technology reduces risk, improves experience, and drives real business results.

6. The Quirky Side of Bespoke Brilliance

True innovation seldom, if ever, comes from following industry trends.

It comes from seeing a problem differently and making solutions happen, no matter how unexpected or unusual the challenge.

At Harbour, we've always believed that the best solutions aren't always the obvious ones. Some of our most impressive, creative, and downright brilliant work hasn't come from long-term product strategies or grand innovation plans. It's come from real-world hiring challenges that needed solving, fast.

▷ *This chapter is a collection of some of those moments, where Harbour's ability to think differently and execute flawlessly has created something truly special.*

Case Study 1: Large-Scale Redeployment at Unprecedented Speed

The Challenge: Redeploying 6,000 Retail Employees in the Face of Industry Disruption

When the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a seismic shift in retail, one major supermarket chain had a huge problem on their hands.

Consumer habits had changed overnight. **In-store shopping was declining**, and **online orders were surging**. As a result:

- They were looking to close **meat, fish, and deli counters.**
- 120 subsidiary stores were **shutting down.**
- This meant **6,000 colleagues** were facing **imminent redundancy.**

At the same time, **thousands of new jobs** were opening in online retail fulfilment.

They needed a system that could:

- ✔ **Identify and match at-risk colleagues** to new roles, based on location, shift preferences, and availability they applied for.

- ✔ **Ensure fairness, transparency, and auditability** so that redeployment decisions could be trusted.

- ✔ **Handle multiple waves of redeployment**, ensuring employees didn't have to reapply every time new jobs became available.

- ✔ **Be built and operational in weeks.**

- ✔ **Interface with their internal job board** (provided by an alternative ATS).

Their existing systems weren't anywhere close to being capable of handling this complexity. They needed flexibility, speed, and algorithmic precision and that's exactly what Harbour delivered.

The Harbour Solution: Intelligent Algorithmic Matching & Seamless Redeployment

✔ **Priority Processing for At-Risk Employees**
- Employees at risk of redundancy were automatically prioritised for open roles, ensuring they had first access to opportunities before other colleagues, with multiple different levels of "at risk" accommodated in the system.

✔ **Automated Decisioning with Human Oversight**
- The system handled all standard role allocations instantly, but when a judgment call was required, it flagged it for a human hiring decision.
- The system processing was also built so that automated decisions were displayed before ultimately actioned, as well as having the decision logic available to be entirely auditable.

✔ **Wave-Based Processing Without Forcing Reapplications**
- Three separate redeployment waves were processed, with:
  ○ Each wave flexing to re-applications and newly available roles.
  ○ Applicants only needing to interview once, with results carrying forward automatically.

✔ **Scalability and Speed—Processing 25,000 Applications in 48 Hours**
- The first wave alone saw over 25,000 role applications processed in under 2 days. A scale and speed that was completely unachievable manually.

The Impact

- **Thousands of colleagues redeployed instead of being made redundant.**
- **Unprecedented efficiency**. What could have taken weeks was completed in **hours.**
- **Massive cost savings** reduced reliance on external hiring, keeping experienced staff within the company.
- **Fair, auditable, and trusted process**. No bias, no manual mistakes, no inconsistencies, no union challenges.

The Result? Harbour took a crisis-level problem and turned it into a structured, seamless redeployment process. One that outperformed anything they had in place... or we think could have been built by most anyone else.... certainly not in the time!

Case Study 2: The Contractor Management System Born from a Bank Breakup

The Challenge: Managing Contractors at Scale, with Full Compliance & Control

During the planned breakup of one of the UK's largest banking groups, a leading accounting firm was engaged to oversee the transition. With thousands of employees, contractors, and flex workers involved, they needed a system to track, manage, and maintain oversight across multiple projects, ensuring seamless continuity as the business was split into two mirror operations.

The solution Harbour built worked so well that the accountancy firm commissioned a tailored version for their own operations, enabling them to manage their associates deployed on client projects with the same level of efficiency.

The system needed to:

✔ **Give managers clear oversight** of the contractors working under them.

✔ **Ensure compliance tracking** for key documents like right-to-work, insurances, and regulatory certifications.

✔ **Automate timesheet submission, approvals, and invoicing** - eliminating admin-heavy processes.

✔ **Differentiate between umbrella company contractors and direct engagements**, handling different payroll structures.

✔ **Enable smooth re-engagements** so that high-performing contractors could be extended or reassigned with minimal friction.

The Harbour Solution: A Contractor Management System Built for Scale
Harbour developed a contractor and flex resource management platform that provided:

✔ **End-to-End Contractor Engagement & Tracking**
- Hiring managers accessed a dedicated portal to track all contractors under their remit.
- Engagements were fully recorded, with visibility on start dates, contract lengths, and key milestones.
- The system automatically triggered approval workflows for contract extensions, terminations, or adjustments while providing timely reminders when end dates were approaching.

✔ **Timesheet & Invoice Automation**
- Contractors submitted timesheets through the system, which managers could approve or push back instantly.
- Approved timesheets auto-generated invoices, reducing admin time for both contractors and finance teams.
- The system differentiated between umbrella company engagements and direct contractors, ensuring payroll compliance.

✔ Proactive Compliance Tracking

- Key documentation expiry dates (right-to-work, certifications, insurances, security clearances, etc.) were logged and flagged for renewal alerts, preventing compliance gaps.
- A full audit log provided end-to-end transparency on approvals, document submissions, and contractor history.
- The system tracked cumulative engagement periods, flagging potential IR35 risks and preventing non-compliance.

✔ Performance & Re-Engagement Insights

- At the end of each engagement, managers rated contractors, creating a performance profile rather than just a transactional record.
- Contractors could update their availability and opt into alerts for new engagements matching their expertise.
- High-rated contractors could be fast-tracked for re-engagement, or directly re-hired with minimal admin.

✔ Financial Transparency & Margin Calculations

- The system automatically calculated charge-out rates and margins where applicable, providing full cost visibility for project budgets.

The Impact

- **Designed for a Banking Split, Now Used by Legal & Professional Firms:** What started as a project-specific solution proved so effective that it became a long-term platform for managing contractor and flex resource workforces.

- **Fully Auditable, Fully Compliant:** Hiring managers, finance teams, and HR had one system of record to manage all aspects of contractor engagements, ensuring no lost paperwork, no compliance gaps, and clear financial controls.

- **Contractors Stay Engaged & Re-Engaged:** The system enabled a talent pool approach, where high-performing contractors could be re-engaged quickly, reducing hiring time and keeping business-critical projects running efficiently.
- **Seamless Payroll & Invoice Automation:** By linking time tracking, approvals, and invoicing, the system cut admin time for contractors, managers, and finance teams alike.

Why This Was a Game-Changer: Most contractor management tools focus on either compliance tracking or payroll processing. Very few combine engagement visibility, performance insights, automated approvals, and financial tracking into a single, seamless solution. Harbour's platform did exactly that.

The Result? Harbour turned a bespoke solution into a long-term workforce management system, now used across different businesses and jurisdictions to streamline contractor engagement, reduce agency costs, and boost re-engagement of trusted talent.

Case Study 3: Custom Server Configurations — Tailored Precision for Legal Standards

The Challenge: Meeting the Legal Sector's Gold Standard for Data & Compliance

A top-tier law firm needed specific server architecture established so it had absolute confidence, to its business-stated standards, in handling sensitive data while adhering to strict legal and security standard commitments. The firm required a solution that ensured compliance, scalability, and high availability.

The Harbour Solution: A Bespoke Infrastructure to Power Precision & Security

Harbour engineered a bespoke server setup that balanced enhanced performance with robust security:

✔ **Dual Redundant Servers**: Both servers could actively handle traffic, featuring real-time data replication and failover capabilities to eliminate downtime.

✔ **Advanced Security Protocols**: Implemented stringent security measures, including encrypted data storage and intrusion detection, to protect sensitive client data.

✔ **Scalable Load Balancing**: A smart load-balancing framework optimised resource usage and maintained performance during high-demand periods.

The Impact:

- **Reliability and Performance**: The firm saw significant improvements in system reliability from their previous solution, ensuring applications were always operational.
- **Security and Compliance**: The custom setup nailed the firm's regulatory and data protection requirements, safeguarding sensitive information to the highest standard — allowing the CIO to rest a little easier at night.
- **Operational Scalability**: The architecture was designed to easily scale, supporting the firm's recruitment and flex resource engagement without extra overhead.

Why This Was a Game-Changer: Harbour didn't just meet a specification—we delivered an infrastructure solution that respected the heightened security sensitivities of the legal sector while future-proofing the firm's operations.

By combining bespoke engineering with compliance-first thinking, we proved that tailored technology can empower even the most risk-averse industries to scale confidently without compromising on resilience, security, or performance.

The Result? A scalable server infrastructure built not just for today's legal compliance and exceptional standards, but tomorrow's ambitions and opportunities.

Key Takeaways from Harbour's Quirky Brilliance

Great hiring solutions aren't always obvious.
The best innovations don't come from following trends, they come from **seeing problems differently and acting fast.**

We don't just build software; we solve problems.
Harbour's most impactful solutions weren't on a roadmap; **they were answers to real-world challenges that couldn't wait.**

Automation isn't about replacing people—it's about making them more effective.
Whether it's **redeploying 6,000 employees, tracking travel in real time**, or **simplifying contractor management**, automation ensures the **right actions happen, at the right time, with full accountability and absolute auditability.**

Compliance, efficiency, and experience don't have to compete.
The best recruitment tech **delivers speed without cutting corners, compliance without bureaucracy**, and **automation without losing control.**

Flexibility isn't just about software; it's about understanding deep client needs.
From **custom server configurations** to **intelligent workforce redeployment**, Harbour proves that **real adaptability goes beyond the interface. It's in the DNA of how we build solutions.**

7. The Harbour Differentiator. Why Our Approach Is Unlike Anything Else

Every recruitment technology provider claims to be flexible, powerful, and innovative. But few, if any, truly are.

For nearly two decades, Harbour has taken a fundamentally different approach to recruitment technology.

We're **not** just another ATS.

We're **not** a one-size-fits-all SaaS provider.

We're **not** trying to force businesses into pre-built workflows.

Instead, we've built something truly unique. A recruitment platform that balances:

- ✔ **Scalability & standardisation** where it matters.
- ✔ **Flexibility & customisation** where it counts.
- ✔ **A technology foundation** that evolves alongside businesses, not limits them.

Truly Bespoke Where It's Needed — Not Just 'Customisation' as a Buzzword

Most ATS providers offer "customisation"; but that just means changing labels, toggling a few settings, or picking from pre-set workflows. They'll promise the earth, but when it gets to scoping, the reality is so very, very different from the polished sales patter.

Harbour goes far beyond that.

💡 **Real configurability means making the system fit your needs, not making your processes fit the system.**

We Build What's Needed — Not Just What's Available

Some of Harbour's most game-changing innovations weren't features that we planned.

They were solutions to real-world problems that businesses needed solving:

⚡ **The Match Me System**: Redeploying 6,000 at-risk employees in record time, with exemplary colleague experience and incredible processing efficiency.

⚡ **Contractor / Flex Resource Management**: A system originally designed for a banking breakup that became a long-term workforce management tool.

⚡ **The iPad Graduate Competition**: Gamifying recruitment before gamification was even a thing.

The Non-Graded Induction Portal: Digitising a complex, safety-critical induction process, significantly reducing corporate exposure to risk while vastly improving the experience for new joiners and local managers.

The Difference?

Harbour doesn't just deliver "best practice" solutions. For clients who need something different, we listen and then we build exactly what they need.

8. What We Built, What We Learned & What's Next

Of course, not everything we've built has remained bespoke.

Many of the solutions or niche functionality we created for specific clients have since evolved into core Harbour functionality; refined, battle-tested, and now available to all.

Others were one-off, client-specific innovations designed for unique challenges that pushed the boundaries of what recruitment tech could do at the time.

And then there are the ideas that still sit in the back of our minds. The things we hope to revisit and rebuild, armed with all the lessons we've learned since. Although, of course, many of them are still working brilliantly for clients and will continue to for years to come.

Every challenge we tackled, every complex requirement that we engineered a solution for, shaped us. Some of those learnings were obvious at the time. Others only became clear with 20/20 hindsight.

Back then, it was about delivering what was needed, when it was needed. But now? Now, we look back with pride, not just at what we built, but at how every single project has made us better, sharper, and even more

determined to push boundaries.

And we're not done yet.

For the right people, for those who see recruitment technology as more than just another system, we'll continue to build amazing, game-changing solutions.

For those in social or healthcare recruitment and compliance, who just want "as it is" - **check out the Safer Recruitment Solution (SRS) from Harbour.**

But for everyone else?
Like a moth to a flame, we hope you enjoy the bright and shiny sold to you by slick sales teams... and genuinely wish you don't singe your wings.