CUSTOMER STORY

CHILI PIPER

Chili Piper Brings an Operational Lens to Improve Diversity, Speed, and Quality of Hire

Chili Piper is the leading inbound conversion platform for B2B revenue teams, whose mission is to reinvent systems of action to increase productivity and job satisfaction. The platform suggests meeting times, uses smart rules to qualify and distribute leads to sales reps in real-time, and automates lead handoffs between SDRs and AEs—doubling inbound conversion rates for its customers, which include Spotify, Shopify, and Square. In 2021, the company raised a $33 million "Series Spicy" and tripled its revenue; it's been using that funding to accelerate product development and grow the team.

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>
> **En-Szu Hu-Van Wright**
> Talent Ops Manager

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Company Overview:

- Fully remote (HQ in Brooklyn, NY)
- Meeting lifecycle automation software
- 200+ employees
- ChiliPiper.com
- ATS: Greenhouse

Pain points / Challenges:

- Chili Piper is committed to being intentional about diversity, even as they scale. But without diversity data, they couldn't uncover omissions or missteps, or move the needle on their efforts.
- The team needed *predictive* rather than *reactive* insights, so they could plan and prepare.
- Recruiting was relying on their ATS's native reports for their data, which didn't capture the entire funnel or offer the level of configurability needed to pinpoint obstacles.

Results with Gem:

- Talent Compass' diversity recruiting insights allow the team to observe trends, make quick pivots, and make their process ever-more-equitable—repositioning an SDR assessment after they saw URGs dropping out of process at disproportionate rates.
- Chili Piper leverages forecast calculators to project hires for each role, allowing them to answer questions like: Do we have the capacity to make those hires? How much bandwidth will we need from the sourcing team?
- Executive-ready dashboards give leadership a high-level view of everything from what applications look like week-over-week, to where time-to-hire stands, to how referral rates are trending.
- With Gem's benchmarks, Chili Piper knows how they compare to companies of their size.

"We've had some exponential growth," says Talent Ops Manager En-Szu Hu-Van Wright, "across *all* departments, but in our sales department in particular. And we're committed to being very intentional about diversity, even as we scale. DEI efforts are top-of-mind for every team in theory; but unless you have the data, there's little you can do to uncover omissions or missteps, or move the needle on your efforts."

Uncovering Opportunities to Make the Funnel More Equitable

En-Szu recently used the Pipeline Analytics module of Talent Compass—which allows recruiters and hiring managers to spot bottlenecks and dropoffs in their hiring funnels and observe pipeline risks across roles—to reposition an assessment in their SDR hiring process. These are high-volume, evergreen roles; "and because we're a smaller team, we decided to pass some of the responsibility to the sales team to manage the process," En-Szu explains. "Of course, bandwidth is limited for *them*, too; so one of the adjustments they made to the process was to replace a video submission with an assessment." But when En-Szu went into Pipeline Analytics, she noticed something: "suddenly there was a drop in people from underrepresented groups making it to the interview stage. I observed it immediately thanks to Gem's analytics, and I knew we needed to make a quick pivot."

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Chili Piper's own product, after all, is built on the premise that face-to-face interactions are more insightful than the "connections" that happen on paper. "That's the difference between real-time interviews and resumes as well," En-Szu explains; "so it was essential for us that candidates who made it to the interview were equitably represented across all groups. Our SDR role is open to folks who aren't *just* from the SaaS industry, who aren't *just* in tech. If you're excited about this space, we want to know you. So when I saw there was only a particular type of candidate advancing from a particular demographic—qualified as they might be—that was an urgent concern."

En-Szu met with the SDR hiring managers. "I used Gem to flag the situation—the data showed URGs dropping off at disproportionately higher rates," she says. "But having a hiring team that was alarmed by the data and immediately on-board with making process changes was invaluable." The team decided not only to move the assessment to later in the process and bring the video submission back, but also to modify the assessment—making it even more equitable. "It used to be a prospecting assessment," En-Szu says. "Now it's like, Sell us a new smartphone: something that really levels the playing field and lets us see candidates' creativity,

communication, and approach in action. It's not necessarily entrenched in experience in tech and SaaS sales."

Since making those changes, the talent team at Chili Piper has "seen a decisive shift in the demographics of the candidates who make it to the interview stage of our process. We've seen a 54% increase in URG candidates and a 31% increase in female-identified candidates making it to the first-round interview. Offers extended to, and offers accepted *by*, URGs have increased. That's been phenomenal to see." En-Szu stresses the collaborative nature of that revision. "I said to the hiring managers, I can alert you to where the problem lies based on the data insights I've got from Gem; but I need to rely on your expertise to come up with the new assessment. And they said, Let's explore this. Let's have fun with it. That collaborative effort was so powerful and it's something I'm really proud of. Gem enabled it. *And* it took a village."

En-Szu adds that, since their SDR hiring process was adjusted, the sales team has become proactively interested in the data Gem provides. "Hiring managers are like, Hey, that report you ran, can you share it with us? And while you're at it, can we also track things X, Y, and Z? Now *they're* looking for bottlenecks, drop-offs, and trends in real-time too. And if I miss something and they notice it, we can work together to revise that element of our process."

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Staying on Top of the Latest Hiring Forecasts

When En-Szu logs into Gem in the morning, the first thing she looks at is the Forecast Calculator. "As the Talent Ops Manager, I run the behind-the-scenes work for our talent team," she explains. "That includes building out our tech stack, process improvement, making sure we're investing in the right resources to begin with. At Chili Piper, we're big on risk-taking, on autonomy, on innovation, on being cutting-edge. One of the reasons I knew Gem was in alignment with those last two values is it understands that talent teams need more than after-the-fact reporting. We need to know what's *coming*, so we can plan and prepare."

Gem's Forecasting Calculator can be viewed from two angles: the Pipeline Forecasting view allows teams to calculate how many candidates they'll need at *every* stage of the funnel—based on historical passthrough rates—in order to hit their hiring goals. The Expected Hires view, on the other hand, shows teams the number of hires they're likely to make based on their *currently* active pipeline.

"I've created a high-level dashboard for the team that looks across *all* roles and tells us what our projected hires are for each role," En-Szu explains.

"I've also broken it out by department. That's what I share with our Talent Development team so we can answer some critical questions: Do we have enough capacity right now to make those hires? What stage of the funnel will need the most attention from us? How much bandwidth, for example, will we need from the sourcing team? How will those forecasted numbers impact the attention we give to referral initiatives, for example, or internal hires?" Those are some of the most important questions the team can ask, En-Szu says; "which is why the calculators are what I look at first every day. What's changed since yesterday? How are we trending?"

Achieving Operational Efficiency

The *second* thing En-Szu looks at is "our pipeline. I love that I can see everything at-a-glance in Gem; but I also like that I can consolidate the view so I only see the final two stages of our process"—candidates who are at the executive interview, and candidates who are at offer. En-Szu says that high-level view allows her to "quickly ping the recruiters on those

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roles or bring the view to our syncs: What's the latest on this candidate? How do we get them across the finish line? It's so useful to have those bottom-of-funnel insights floated to the top."

But "performance optimization" means more than ensuring late-stage candidates aren't falling through the cracks. En-Szu "leans very heavily" on the Pipeline Analytics module of Talent Compass, which she filters by job. "I pin this in a Slack channel for every job we're hiring for," she explains, "so we have real-time insights that answer these questions: What do passthrough rates look like for each role across

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demographics? Are we noticing any bottlenecks that need immediate flagging? Maybe it looks like candidates are sitting in stage X for Y number of days. This shouldn't be happening; how do we resolve it? We're really talking about the ability to make quick pivots and optimize performance the moment we see trustworthy funnel data that spurs us to action."

Executive Reporting

Prior to Gem, En Szu and team were relying on their ATS's native reports for their data, "which wasn't really cutting it. I was creating tons of spreadsheets. It was messy. And the data wasn't exactly accurate or usable; we couldn't parse or filter it in the ways we needed to. I was creating reports in Google Sheets, emailing them out on a regular basis. But the information was scattered, not centralized. So when I saw Gem, I was like, This is something that could really empower us to accelerate our hiring and ensure we aren't sacrificing quality for quantity as we hire at this pace."

Among the features Gem has built during its partnership with Chili Piper are Executive Dashboards and Peer Benchmarks. En-Szu reports to the company's Senior Director of People, who oversees Recruiting, Talent Development, and Employee Experience. "Tyler [Parson] is a huge Gem fan," En-Szu says, "*especially* now that I can create these beautiful dashboards in the product to share with her. The dashboards give her a high-level view of what applications look like week-over-week, what our hiring rate looks like, where our time-to-hire stands. She's got a quick snapshot of who's made it to the final interview, referral rates and how those are trending. *All* in one view." A lot of that data—applications and referral rates, for example—gives En-Szu and Tyler a sense of whether Chili Piper's employer branding or referral initiatives are succeeding.

"I love, too, that there's a new benchmarking feature," En-Szu adds. "I'm a pretty competitive person, and now I have clarity on how we compare to companies of our size. I can be like, Okay, how do we continue to be in the league?"

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En-Szu returns the conversion to diversity. "We set goals and targets for a lot of things at Chili Piper; but our philosophy and approach to DEI is simply: there can never be too much of a good thing. Instead of: How do we get X percentage of people from Y demographic, it's more like: Who are we partnering with? Are we networking and marketing in the right places? We look at compensation, at retention, at the ERGs we develop. It's a collaborative and intentional effort, and it's felt in every corner of the organization and at every step of the hiring process. If you look at a job description for anyone on the People team, the number one bullet point is: prioritize and be passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion."

That's one of the reasons Gem's data is so critical for the team at Chili Piper—"because it's not enough to say this is important for us; something has to hold our feet to the fire. Like that SDR pipeline," En-Szu continues. "Sometimes the data puts you in an uncomfortable position, but it's a position that allows you to grow the way you need to, the way you *should* be. So having a tool like Gem is incredible. It alerts us to how we're trending; and as long as we're on an upward trajectory in our diversity efforts, we're on the right track. Candidates want you to demonstrate to them that DEI is a core company value, and in a tangible way. Gem's data—and the ways we've chosen to use it—help us show them how much we care."

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To learn more about how Gem can help your team, visit gem.com or contact us at info@gem.com