7 Ways Recruiters Can Strategically Collaborate with Hiring Managers

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Introduction

Strong recruiter-hiring manager relationships increase productivity, decrease time-to-hire, drive better hiring decisions, and boost your overall talent brand.

And they're no longer a nice-to-have in today's talent market. Below, we offer 7 best practices for how to build strong (data-backed) partnerships with hiring managers.

If you're a sourcer or recruiter, a great deal of your mental bandwidth is likely being spent on candidate experience (CX). This is probably truer *now*, in 2022, than it ever was: it's a candidate's market; top talent is swimming in options; and recruiting teams—no matter the size of the company they're hiring for—are struggling to compete against simultaneous offers.

In such a world, candidates' positive experiences of your hiring process are essential. What's perhaps *less* obvious is that there's a direct correlation between CX and recruiting's relationship with hiring managers. Hiring teams that get this equation *right* will leverage "The Great Resignation" for their own good, turning it into "The Great Attraction" for their organizations.

Of course, relationships are more than a mathematical equation; but there are some numbers behind them, and some measurable best practices you can implement to build and sustain them. In 2014, Bersin by Deloitte examined 16 factors that drive talent acquisition performance, and found that the biggest driver—*four times bigger* than the second-biggest driver—was strong relationships between recruiters and their HMs. Four years later, Bersin's research found that high-maturity talent acquisition orgs share a common trait of "thorough integration with the business"—an integration that forefronts "better partnering with hiring managers."

Effective recruiter-hiring manager relationships increase productivity and decrease time-to-hire.

The biggest driver of talent acquisition performance—*4x bigger* than the second-biggest driver—is strong relationships between recruiters and their HMs. And high-maturity talent acquisition orgs share a trait of “thorough integration with the business,” which forefronts “better partnering with hiring managers.” (Bersin by Deloitte)

They drive better hiring decisions, boost your talent brand exponentially, and give talent acquisition greater visibility in the business as a whole. What’s more, they’re a necessity at a time when TA *must* act as a strategic partner to the business—rather than a reactive support member—if the company is going to meet its hiring goals in this ultra-competitive market. All of this happens through transparency, trust, and the ability to gently put your foot down when you need to. And the driver behind *all* of it? Is data.

At Gem, we’re constantly speaking with talent acquisition teams about how we can support them in making recruiting a team sport. This resource came out of those conversations. We’ve also been able to witness many outstanding recruiter-hiring manager relationships that result in consistent hires of best-in-class talent. Some of those recruiters and hiring managers—at organizations like Course Hero, Credera, FullStory, Grammarly, Roblox, and Webflow—have offered their own best practices below.

1. Help Managers Articulate Their Needs from the Start

Come to the kickoff meeting with a handful of prospective candidate profiles that you and your HM can go through together. Make sure the profiles are different *enough* that your HM can point out the details about each that are most compelling. This is the most sure-fire way to help them articulate what excites them.

Hiring managers don't always know exactly what they want from a newly-opened role or how to communicate the nuances of their talent needs. And when they can't articulate what they're looking for, they won't be satisfied with the quality of candidates sent their way... which sends *you*, recruiter, back to the drawing board.

So insist on a conversation rather than an email or req hand-off. A 1:1 allows you to cover the bases; it demands that your hiring manager think the role through and get clarity on what they need; and it ensures they won't have unrealistic expectations about the kinds of candidates you'll be handing over. (In fact, consider telling them you can't post the role until this meeting happens. Moving forward without the kickoff session may just be a waste of time.)

While you're at it, we recommend coming to the kickoff meeting with a handful of prospective candidate profiles that you and your hiring manager can go through together. Make sure the profiles are different *enough* that your HM can point out the distinctive details about each that are most compelling for them. Putting the profiles right in front of them might help them articulate what they get excited by, and what makes them lose interest in a prospective candidate. What does an ideal profile *look like*?

Here's a shortlist of questions worth asking in the kickoff meeting:

- What's the role's title? Are there "title synonyms" talent might use in their profiles that would help me search for them?
- What will the person be responsible for (projects, impact, etc.)?
- What pain points will the hire solve?
- What qualifications, skill sets, and tool proficiencies *must* they come with; and which skills and qualifications are nice-to-haves? What skill sets does a good candidate have? What skill sets does a stellar candidate have?
- What will their day-to-day look like? What tasks does it entail?
- How will their role fit into your team's structure? Whom will they report to, and who will report to *them*?
- Who will they cross-functionally collaborate with most often?
- How will you measure their success?
- What's the best person you know who has worked in this role? What qualities made them the best?
- Are there silver medalists from past open roles whom you think would be a good fit?
- In what ways should this new hire be similar to the last person who held the role? In what ways will they ideally be different?
- What challenges are typical—or what challenges do you foresee—in hiring for this role?
- What are your deal-breakers?
- What are the best sources for finding talent for this role?

If possible, try to immerse yourself in your HM's world—even if just for one or two business meetings. Put yourself in a position to hear what the *whole team* is doing, how they interact with each other, what their communication styles look like. Speak with team members who'll be working closely with the new hire. What do *they* think is critical to success in the role? Who's the best person they know who worked in that role? What qualities made them so successful in it?

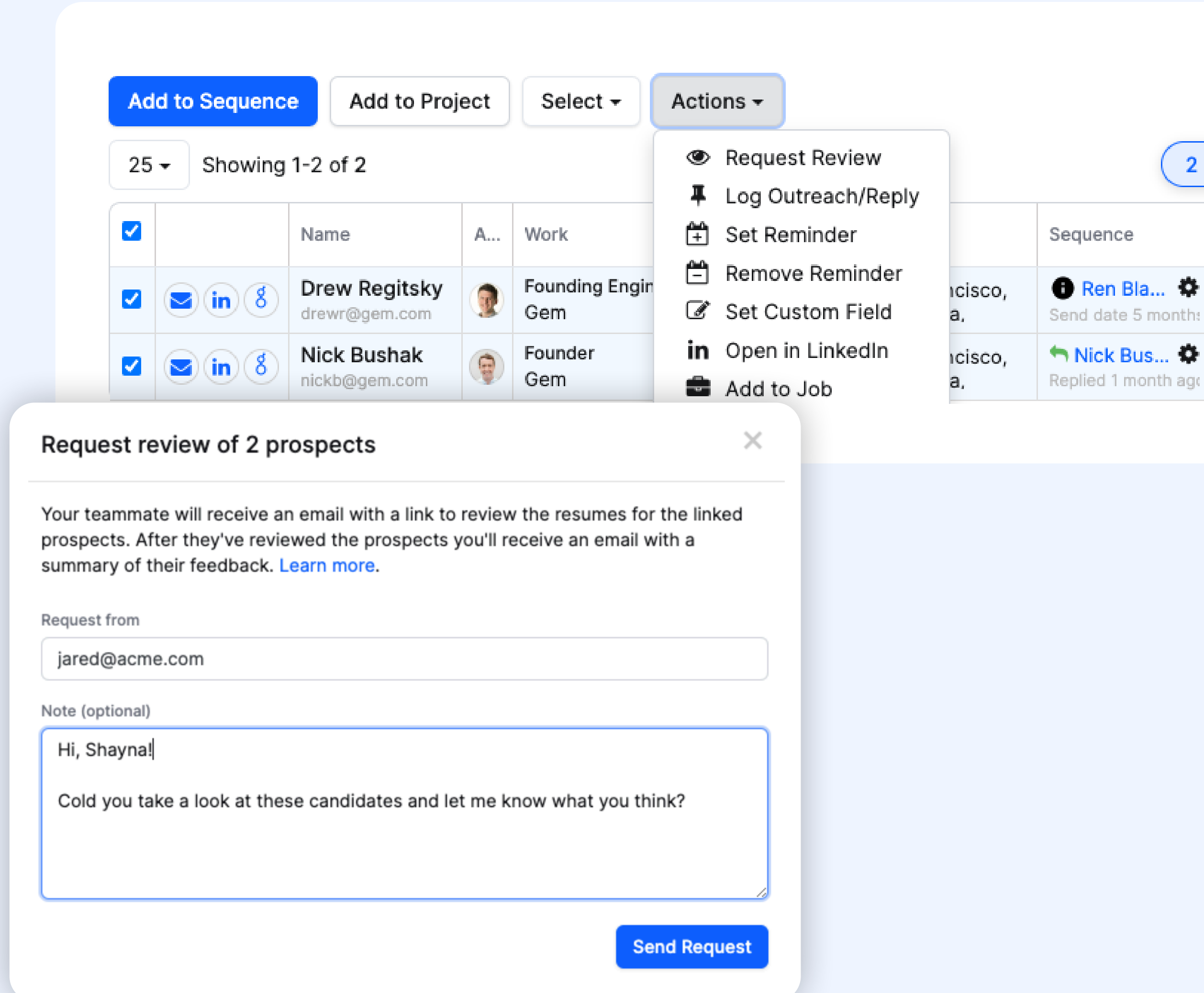
Maybe you and your HM use the kickoff meeting to draft the job description together. Maybe your HM has already drafted it; and you use this time to make changes to the content based on your knowledge and understanding of the market, the pool of available talent, and how realistic the manager's expectations were when they were drafting it.

Don't close the kickoff meeting without determining a few things:

- Who will review resumes?
- Who will pre-screen candidates and who will be involved in the interviews?
- What focus areas will each interviewer cover to ensure you get a holistic picture of the candidate? (Note: *Use structured interviews*!)
- How quickly do you need the HM to get back to you after screenings, interviews, etc.? (Gem's historical data—passthrough rates and time-in-stage for similar roles, for example, can help level-set expectations here.)
- How frequently does the HM want you to check in about hiring progress?
- How do they prefer you to stay in touch with them? What's the expected time to fill this position?

Gem's Reviews feature allows recruiters and hiring managers to calibrate on profiles directly in-product, so recruiters can better understand what managers' ideal candidate looks like. After downloading candidate profiles directly from wherever you source (or after pulling former silver medalists from your ATS through Gem's Candidate Rediscovery), you can send a review request directly from Gem to your hiring manager's email.

The HM can flip through profiles and approve or reject as they go, leaving more detailed notes on particular prospects if they wish. Those notes are logged in the prospect's Activity Feed in the Gem extension—so everyone else on the team can benefit from that context the next time they're on that person's profile.



fullstory

Thoughts from Randi-Lynn Bruso

Director of Recruiting

Building relationships with hiring managers is my top priority whenever I move into a new company or role, because the strength of those relationships is directly correlated with my ability to successfully build out teams. I put a lot of emphasis on cultivating familiarity and trust in the first 90 days. Those initial months are like an extended interview process. You're figuring out who your hiring managers are, what they're contending with, what their pain points are from a hiring standpoint, what excites them, what they look for in a candidate. You're digging deep into the ideal profile for their hire. I'll often say, "give me your top sales folks," and I'll go have conversations with those team members. It helps me understand the impact hiring managers hope their new hires will have. And it helps me understand the business and formalize how I'm going to go to market to find those ideal profiles.

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Formalization is key. The biggest piece of advice I'd give recruiters is to have a very clear process and don't waver from that. Having a process, being able to articulate it and stick with it, gives you credibility and earns you confidence. From there, be your most authentic self. I have a process; I know it works; I know how to implement it. And on top of it, I am who I am—the good, the bad, the ugly—let's figure this out together, with our real, authentic selves at the table. Finally, remember that your job is to support these folks with your own well-earned business acumen, with the data and best practices of your x years of experience. Your hiring managers are your customers; and as in every other industry, customer experience will set you apart.

2.

Start Your Candidate Search in Your Own Backyard

Start with your recruiting solution to build pipeline for each new req. Doing so reduces both time-to-hire and cost-of-hire.

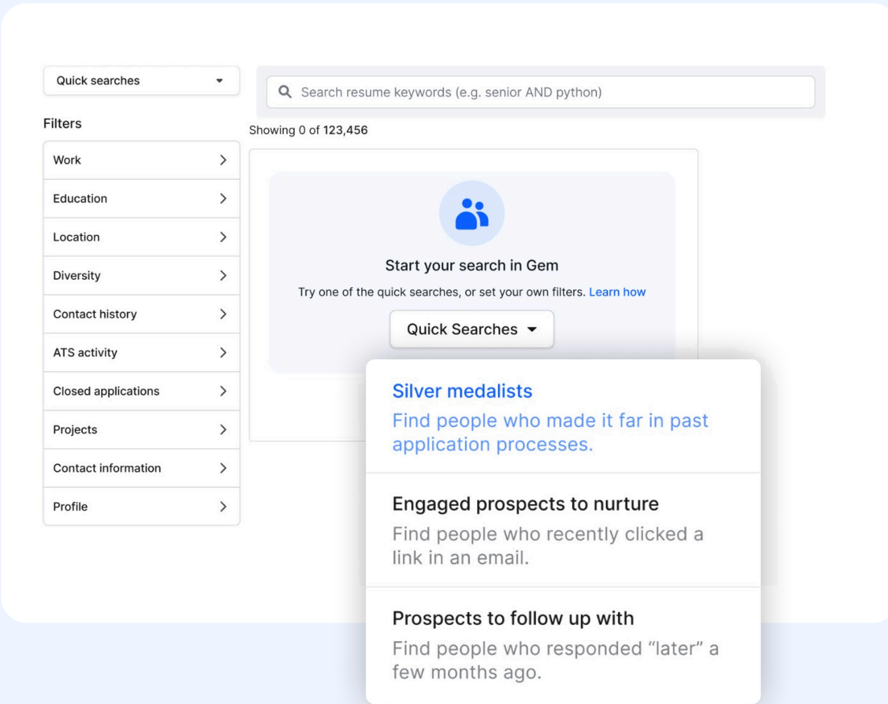
After all, not only are you *not* sourcing from scratch, you're also tapping into talent who's already expressed interest in your organization—and perhaps who's already been through your hiring process. They're bought into what you have to offer.

If there's one thing we don't have to impart to you, it's the importance of speed in the hiring process—which ultimately impacts your relationship with your HM. Much of what makes up the "time-to-fill" metric for a given role is the work that needs to be done at the top of the funnel—before prospects even apply. And as repositories of all your past hiring efforts, your CRM and ATS are goldmines of talent that you've already vetted, had exchanges with—and in *some* cases, already put through the hiring process.

Whether they rejected your offer or you didn't move forward with *them*, that was *then*, and this is *now*. Talent has trajectories and learning curves, and right-fits don't always happen the first time around. So begin building pipeline with the talent that's *there*, and exponentially decrease your sourcing time. *That* talent might be the best fit for your currently-open roles.

Hopefully you've been nurturing the talent in your talent engagement platform through drip campaigns all along; but even if you *haven't*, this is a sure way to speed up the process. After all, not only are you *not* sourcing from scratch, you're also tapping into talent who's already expressed interest in your organization. If they've gone through your hiring process, they've already bought into your product and your culture. They've possibly already met your team. And so on.

These profiles—of former silver medalists, for example—may be what you share with your HM to calibrate in your kickoff meeting. Having those profiles in hand early on is a cost-savings: it means you can pass over the job boards and RPOs you might otherwise need to fill those roles. And it means your hiring manager can rest assured that you're already well on your way to making that hire.



With Gem's Candidate Rediscovery, users can start building pipeline not only with all talent in their CRM, but also with all candidates in their ATS. Have an open req for an SDR manager? Filter down to SDRs who rejected your offers two years ago; they've probably been promoted since then. Looking for women who previously applied to be front-end software engineers at your company? Filter down to the ones who received terrific scores on their scorecards.

With Candidate Rediscovery, you can filter by job, interview stage reached, interview score, and more. Once you've narrowed your search results, just add those candidates to a reengagement sequence and sit back while the replies come in.

ROBLOX

Thoughts from Candice Tang

Talent Acquisition Director

At Roblox, my recruiting team is basically embedded in our Data Science and Analytics Platform org. When we were onsite, you could find me in the engineering building, posted up with the directors and hiring team. We have multiple Slack channels to collaborate with hiring managers and share articles to keep recruitment up-to-date with what's going on in the industry. I also have my team attend the team syncs. Every other Thursday, each person on our data science and analytics platform team takes 60 seconds to talk about something personal going on in their life and what they're working on that they're really excited about. Recruiting attends that meeting. It's a great opportunity to show off the team to potential candidates. It's yet another way we're embedded in the team we recruit for, and it ensures we're subject-matter experts in the domain we're supporting.

I can't stress enough the importance of understanding the business you're supporting to be able to tell the right story to the candidate and get them in the door. It's easy to get buy-in if you're educated on the HM's side of the business. It's also easier to get buy-in with data. Data demands collaboration, because it tells a story you have to interpret with your hiring managers. Say we're looking at passthrough rates with Gem and we notice we're losing people at the technical review stage. Is it the way we're assessing people's technical aptitude; is it the test we're using; is it how we're delivering the news that they have to take a technical assessment? These are places we can coach our hiring managers; but they're also places we can partner to optimize that stage in the funnel. Data also gives visibility into top-of-funnel work—how many people we've reached out to, who's getting back to us. Hiring managers get anxious when they need to fill a role and it's not happening right away; so if you can give them proof that the work is happening in those early stages, that's mitigating.

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3. Educate Hiring Managers on Your Recruiting Process , and Set Expectations with Historical Data

Sketch out the end-to-end recruiting-and-hiring process for your hiring managers. Give them the details and pain points of each stage of the funnel, so they can see the parts of the process that aren't readily visible to them.

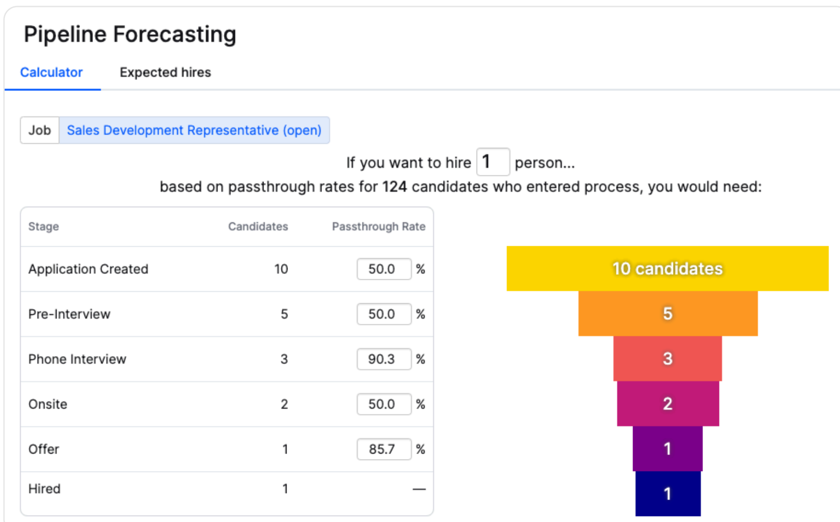
We've suggested sitting in on team meetings to try to understand your hiring manager's world. But it's important to educate them on *your* world—and its processes—as well. As you probably know from experience, the title "hiring manager" is a bit of a misnomer. Most hiring managers fall into that role by accident, and they're only *in* it for as long as their team is hiring. They may only make one or two new hires a year, and the tasks they've been asked to perform for those hires may have been minimal.

Since they're not hanging out at the top of the funnel with you, they may not be fully aware of how "the recruiting process" differs from "the interview process." They may be wondering what's taking so long to even *see* a qualified candidate while you're out there sourcing talent, screening, testing, and shortlisting. So let them know what's happening in the background as *they're* going about their other day-to-day tasks.

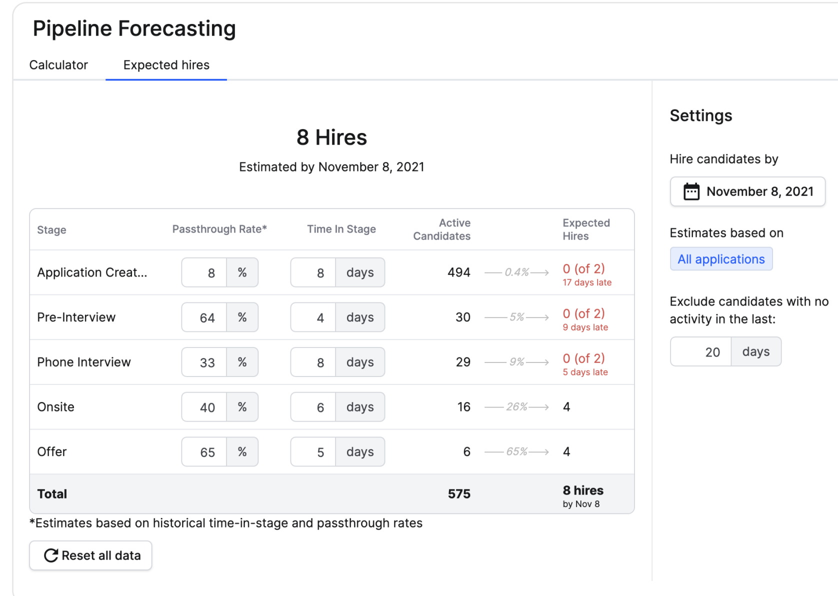
Whether as a team with *all* your company's hiring managers, or in a one-on-one with your HM, sketch out the end-to-end hiring process for them. Give them the details and pain points of each stage of the funnel so they can see the parts of the process that aren't readily visible to them. This will emphasize the importance of planning and lead time, lend them awareness of the work that takes place on your end, and create awareness of all the dependencies (and interdependencies) along the way.

A more specific way to educate HMs is to tell them what the role they're currently hiring for has *historically* looked like. This is the surest way to set realistic expectations about the timeline for their open req. If your HM wants the role filled in three weeks but the average time to fill that position is 45 days, you're more likely to help them *see* this with data. With Gem's forecasting calculators, you can level-set expectations based on historical passthrough rates and time-in-stage—as well as on how many candidates are *currently* in your pipeline.

Gem's Pipeline Forecasting calculator lets you input the number of hires you need for a role; Gem surfaces the number of candidates you'll need at each stage of the process in order to make those hires. This helps you align on where to allocate resources for your current open req. How much work will have to go into the top of the funnel? What additional candidate experiences might you need to offer to improve your offer-to-hire ratio? And so on.



Gem's Expected Hires calculator, on the other hand, estimates how many hires you can expect to make based on your current pipeline makeup. You can edit your historical passthrough rates and time-in-stage if there are parts of the funnel you've since optimized for (or plan to optimize for) to see how that will impact your expected number of hires.

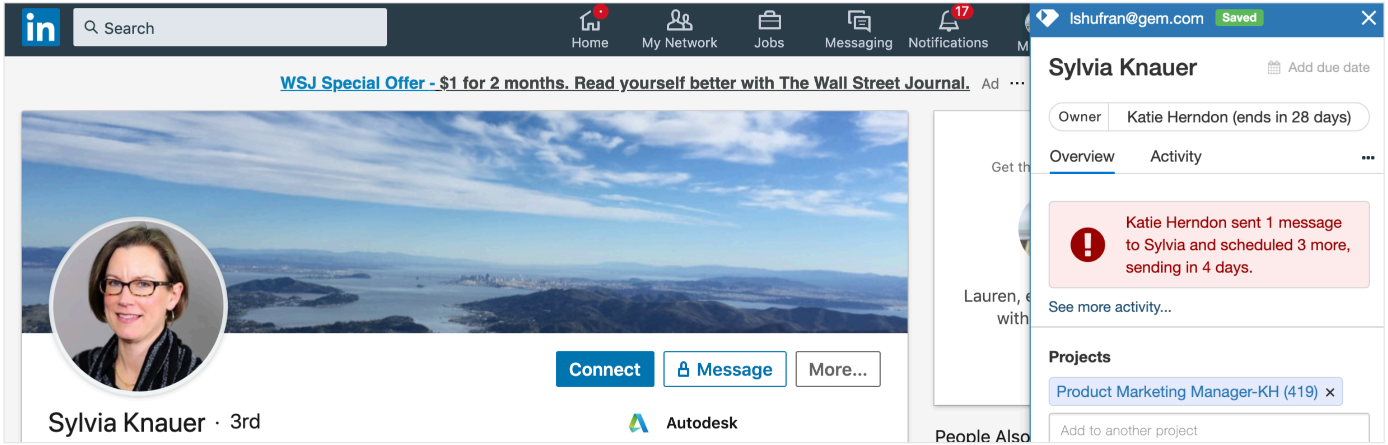


Alongside Pipeline Forecasting and the Expected Hires calculator, Gem shows historical passthrough rates, time-in-stage, and time-to-hire for any given role. Use this data to explain to HMs exactly where candidates tend to drop off; where bottlenecks typically happen; and which parts of the process will require more attention, effort, and optimization if they want to reduce time-to-hire this time around.

4.
Use a Solution that Allows Hiring Managers to Be as Hands-On as They Want

Some HMs will naturally want to be more involved in the hiring process than others; and if your recruiting tech stack is set up in such a way that each manager can be as involved as they'd like, you'll make everyone happy from an engagement perspective. Do your HMs want to dig in and source for their open roles *themselves*? If so, use a sourcing solution that displays the entirety of a prospect's historic activity, so they don't have to worry that they're stepping on recruiters' toes if there's someone they want to reach out to.

Do they want to craft their own outreach, have it *appear* to come from them, or get replies into their own inboxes so they can pick up the thread when a prospect replies as interested? If so, use a solution that allows for send-on-behalf-of (which more-than-doubles response rates, especially for high-level roles), or that allows recruiters and hiring managers to collaborate on outreach to whatever degree the HM wants to be involved. This way the *entire* team is discovering outreach best practices through collaboration.



webflow

Thoughts from Arquay Harris

VP of Engineering

When I came to Webflow, I had my lead, who was very well-versed in Gem, do a training for my managers. I saw what the benefits would be if the team learned to take advantage of it. Now at any point, an eng manager with an open req can go into Gem, source their own candidates, and send their own pre-built sequences. A lot of managers have gotten very sophisticated with their sequences over time, and we've seen a great deal of success from those efforts.

We use SOBO [send-on-behalf-of] for director and senior manager roles. And I'll typically personalize it. I recently combed my network and gave a recruiter 20 or so referrals. And I was like, *This* person I met at a conference; *this* person I've had multiple conversations with; so when you reach out on behalf of me, please say *this*. When someone responds, I get a copy of that reply. And then I have a back-and-forth with them. When I call them, *that* touchpoint gets logged in Gem, too. The engagement feels organic, because it *is*—the recruiter applies their expertise when it comes to the messaging; but it's personalized and has my name on it, which is compelling for those recipients.

If I've combed my own network and put candidates in Gem and I'm curious about who's biting, all of that data is right there in Gem's Outreach Stats. If no one's responding, it's up to me to ask, Is there something I can do here? Can I send a personal note?

Webflow's eng managers are in Gem every single day, multiple times a day. *I* go into Gem for a birds-eye view of where eng recruiting stands at any given moment. But I *also* go into Gem when I want to check on certain candidates and see if they're responding. Maybe I've been trying to recruit an infrastructure director for a while. What's going on with that outreach? What does that pipeline look like? Gem scratches that itch to immediately know where an open role stands. And if I've combed my own network and put candidates in Gem—like I did recently—and I'm curious about who's biting, all of that is right there. I have the answer in just a few clicks. If no one's responding, it's up to me to ask, Is there something I can do here? Can I send a personal note?

5.
Build Trust with Data and Insights

As is the case with so many relationships, trust can make or break the strength of *this* one… and thus the strength of your hires. One great way to practice trust—perhaps during the kickoff meeting—is to share sourcing insights with your HMs:

- What subject lines have led to exceptionally high open rates in previous searches like this one?
- If you've linked out to company content in past outreach (which you should be doing!), what content got the most clicks and was most compelling to talent?
- Which clicks led to interested *replies*?
- What sources have been most valuable to you in the past for roles like this? Indeed, what's your best source-of-hire for this role or this department?

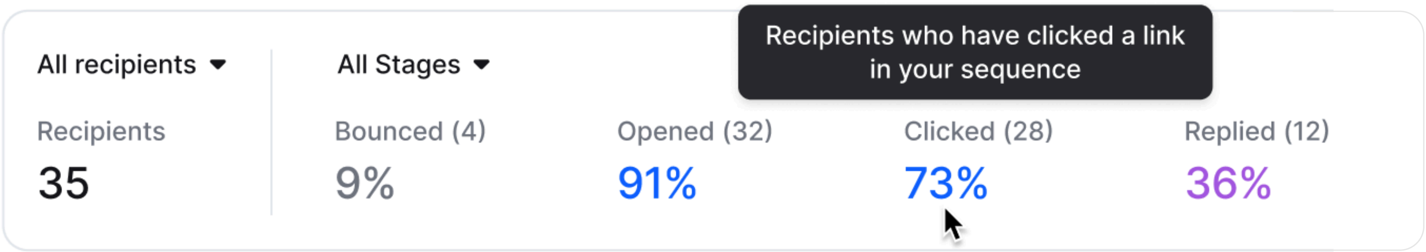
Content Stats Take a tour

Links in sequence content

in the past 3 months | + Filter by sequence

☑ Exclude Calendly and LinkedIn URLs

URL	Sequences	Msgs Sent	Recipients	Replied	Clicked	Replied & Clicked	Replied Rate per Clicked
gem.com	122	13886	6178	816 (13%)	483 (8%)	182 (3%)	38%
gem.com/company	62	3521	3287	268 (8%)	339 (10%)	77 (2%)	23%
ats.comparably.com/api/v1/gh/zensourcer	40	2177	1938	332 (17%)	149 (8%)	79 (4%)	53%
gem.com/blog/what-its-like-to-work-at-gem	63	4415	4415	315 (7%)	115 (3%)	45 (1%)	39%
gem.com/blog/series-c	46	2711	2100	373 (18%)	77 (4%)	40 (2%)	52%
techcrunch.com/2021/09/28/recruiting-platfo...	68	1363	1363	243 (18%)	56 (4%)	31 (2%)	55%
instagram.com/lifeatgem	139	12097	5772	623 (11%)	51 (1%)	11 (0%)	22%



These insights don't stop at the top of the funnel. Hopefully, your recruiting solution holds the data that allows you to forecast hiring outcomes. It tells you the number of people you sourced, screened, interviewed, and extended offers to in order to get an offer accept the *last* time this role was open. It shows how long candidates sat in each of those stages before moving on. It holds the reasons candidates rejected your offer, or the reasons you didn't move forward with *them*. (This might be an eye-opening moment for HMs: How many candidates withdrew from process because it wasn't moving quickly enough? How many of those withdraws were based on HMs' unresponsiveness?) It tells you what your talent pipeline looks like *now*, based on how many people you've been nurturing relationships with. And so on.

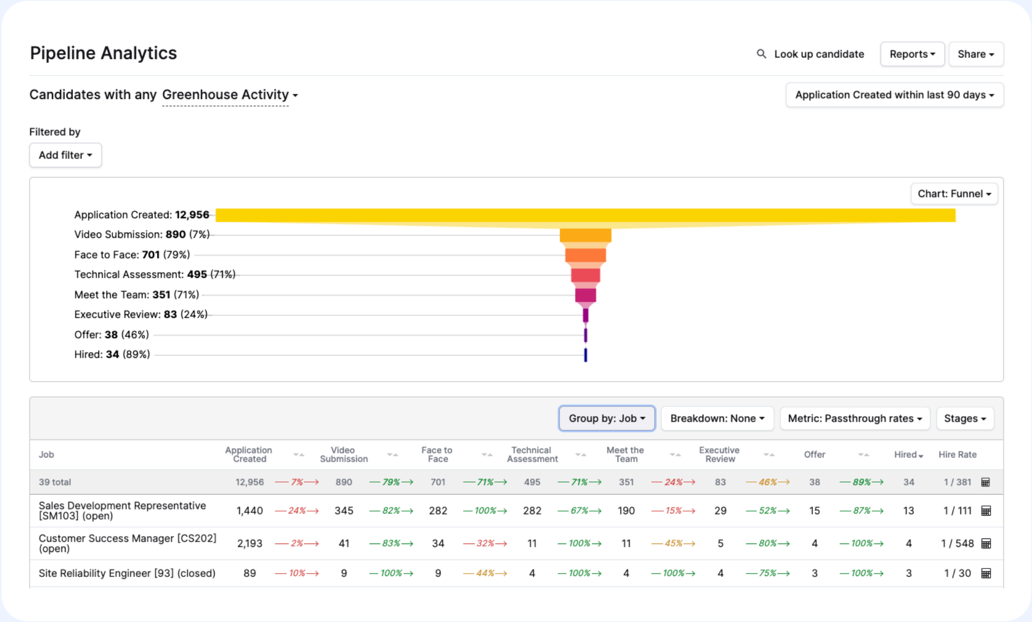
All of this data can be shared with your hiring manager early on in process to prepare them for what's likely to come. Once the hiring process is in *motion*, you should be syncing with your HM regularly to keep them updated—in a data-centric way—about what's happening with the role. Gather data across your talent management platform to visualize the *entire* recruiting funnel, then slice-and-dice metrics to uncover insights on your recruiting strategy and process. (More on this in a moment.)

Of course, you'll be building trust with your HM through a *variety* of data points—from what other companies in the industry are doing to attract talent, to what talent is looking for in their next role, to what vacancy periods look like right now, to what perks and benefits your competitors are offering. But the most impactful insights you can offer them are about what's happening with *this* role, right *now*.

With Gem's Pipeline Analytics, recruiters and hiring managers can view their entire talent pipelines at a glance. By juxtaposing outreach data with your team's ATS funnel stages, we give you a full-funnel view of your open role, from the very first outreach to offer-accept.

Pipeline Analytics easily visualizes data for both recruiters and their HMs, so they can take those insights and apply them to hire faster, and smarter. It answers questions like:

- *How many offers-accepted did Recruiter X get in Q4?*
- *What have our passthrough rates from phone screen to onsite for Software Engineers in the Austin office been since January?*
- *How many candidates in the Sales department have offers extended that haven't been accepted yet?*
- *How many candidates will we need at each stage of the funnel to hire 7 Product Managers, based on historic conversion rates?*
- *Which hiring managers or departments are the most selective during the resume review or onsite stages?*
- *Which roles are easier to fill than others?*
- *Where are women dropping off disproportionately to men in the recruiting process?*



Gem

CREDERA

Thoughts from Patrick Alexander

Director of Talent Acquisition

Every year I think being a technical recruiter is going to get easier, and it doesn't. Luckily, most hiring managers I work with already know this; but sometimes they need reminders. At Credera, we regularly share top-of-funnel activity and involve our hiring managers in decisions about what our hiring process should look like. That way, HMs don't just have visibility; they also have *agency* in hiring at all stages of the funnel.

One crucial characteristic of a good recruiter is a willingness to keep learning from your teams. I talk with developers about what they're working on. I read blog posts by our CTO, Jason Goth. Jason is actually a great example of how essential it is to be able to interpret traits that excite your hiring manager.

Early on, a practice leader said to me in an intake session: "Find me another Jason Goth." It seemed like an impossible request; but it was a valuable exercise. I went to spend time with Jason. I looked for behaviors and personality traits. Jason's been so successful because he's always looking for the next thing to learn. He seeks out challenges for the joy of solving them. So I started looking for those qualities in candidates. Did they talk about how much they read in their personal time? Were they working out coding challenges outside of work?

At Credera, we regularly share top-of-funnel activity and involve our hiring managers in decisions about what our hiring process should look like. That way, HMs don't just have visibility; they also have *agency* in hiring at all stages of the funnel.

That experience taught me a lot about the importance of shared personas.

Building trust with HMs takes patience. I come from the staffing world, where we were compensated by numbers. At Credera, we're compensated on quality. I'll never forget my first debrief with our former CEO. I chimed in on a candidate, and he said, "Pat, I don't need a salesman in here right now." He knew my background; and it took time for him to trust some of the insights I brought into debriefs. That's going to be the case for any recruiter-hiring manager relationship. Everybody is trying to reach the same goal; but it can take time to remember that. You've got to spend the cycles. The trust comes from that.

CREDERA

Thoughts from Kelsey Dirks

Talent Acquisition Manager

As a general rule, the more touchpoints with hiring managers, the better. At Credera we have weekly phone calls to discuss pipelines, need, and demand; and regular touchpoints to discuss best next steps for specific candidates. We also meet once a quarter to give practice leaders a snapshot of the health of recruiting: current headcounts, entry level-to-leadership position ratios, where we're seeing successful passthrough rates and where we may be experiencing candidate drop-off. Of course you can bring all the data in the world; but if you can't explain why those numbers are valuable, the data is useless. *That's* recruitment's area—to educate HMs on what the patterns tell us, and how we can use them to optimize our funnel.

We have an incredibly high bar at Credera. But when you hire such technically-capable people, you create a lot of business and you scale fast. This role has been an exercise in educating leaders around give-and-take. Prospective candidates may not be perfect; but can they do the job that needs to get done in the next six months while we mentor them in other areas? We can only reach our hiring goals by taking some risks; but we also need to ensure that retention is there on the other side. Suddenly we're asking our HMs things like: how are we setting candidates up for long-term success? Your intake questions might change as the business transforms. That's okay—in fact, it can be exciting.

When I first became a technical recruiter, I was a student of anyone who would talk to me. But I think I learned the most from my calls with candidates. I'd say, "Look, I'm new to this role, and there's so much I can learn from you. So walk me through your projects. Talk to me like I'm a fifth grader." It took some of the burden off my hiring managers to walk me through technical questions. That kind of independent learning felt great... plus candidates really love to talk about their work!

I think one of the more important things I've learned is how deeply to dig with each individual hiring manager. I work with HMs who give me two-sentence feedback on candidates, and HMs who send paragraphs with bulleted quotes and comments. Over time, you learn what certain hiring managers are focused on and where their blind spots may be. You come to each conversation prepared to do a different kind of work to get the same questions answered. It's a remarkable study in human variety.

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6.
Check in with Your Hiring Managers Often

You and your HM determined a communication cadence in your kickoff meeting... now stick to it. In the first place, no matter *how* well you've mapped out your process, unforeseen changes will occur: candidates will share concerns you didn't expect (and that you need to share with your HM); the needs and responsibilities of the role might change, as might priorities, as might headcount (which your HM needs to share with *you*... immediately).

If nothing more, these check-ins should be a time for you to update your hiring manager about the health of the pipeline for their open roles. How many candidates are in each stage of the process? Who are your *top* candidates, and where are *they* in process? Which candidates need immediate attention, and who on the hiring team needs to take action on them?

In these routine syncs, fill hiring managers in on:

Sourcing insights: How much work is happening at the top of the funnel? Solutions with activity views should show the number of prospective candidates viewed on LinkedIn, the number of prospects added to your CRM or outreach solution, the number of first messages and follow-ups, the number of interested replies, and the number of candidates converted into process.

Passthrough rates: Where are the bottlenecks in your current funnel? How do passthrough rates look compared to those in other departments in your organization? How do they look when you break them down by gender, or by race/ethnicity, or by source, or by location? The more granular data you can get, the more likely you are to discover *precisely* where you need to place your attention, rather than calling "code red" and overhauling the entire process on a req whose problem you can't put your finger on.

Offer rejection reasons: Offer rejection reasons offer a goldmine of information about your candidate experience, your culture, your hiring process, and more. They also help you—alongside your HMs—make pivots in your process in real-time, enhancing the experience for those who are *currently* in your funnel.

You should also check in after interviews. This is especially true after the first few interviews, to ensure that the candidates you've referred are on-target. The earlier you can pivot if something doesn't align, the better. But ideally you'll get together and debrief after *every* interview. Where did candidates meet expectations, and where did they *miss* them? What might be improved in the vetting/screening process? Even if things are going well, there's always room in the process to assess, fine-tune, and evolve.

When milestones happen between meetings—a phone screen with a particularly exciting candidate, a follow-up call after an interview, and so on—keep your hiring managers updated with a quick email, text, or @mention in your recruiting solution to keep them in the loop.

It's almost impossible to *over*-communicate in this relationship. These shorter, one-off communications will continue to build HM trust. They're also where you can remind the HM what steps they can take to keep the process moving forward—and of what they're *not* doing that may be delaying things, putting you at risk of candidate dropoff. Once that foundation of trust is built, they're less likely to react with exasperation to these reminders. After all, they now see all the work being done on *your* end.

Thoughts from Andon Cowie

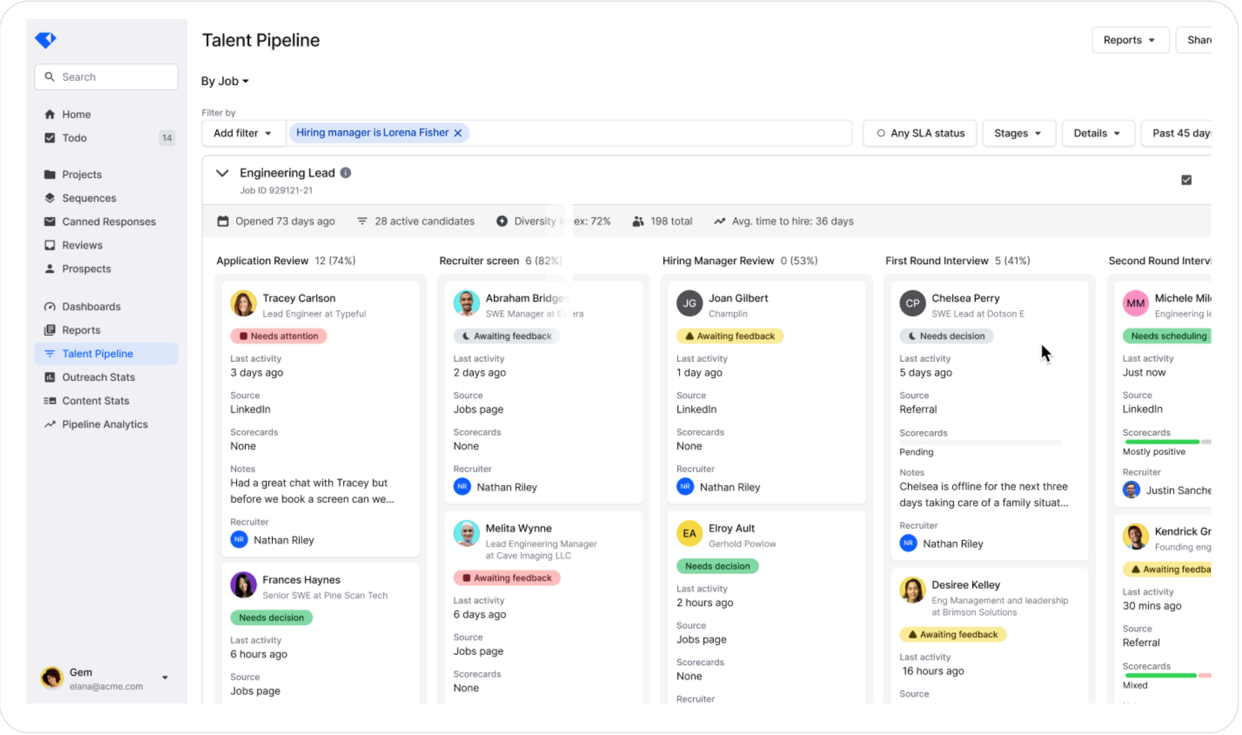
Head of Global Recruiting

Prior to Gem, recruiters would just select 'General' or 'Other,' which didn't help us understand the story behind a specific offer decline. At the end of every quarter we'd have to go back and do an audit, check in with individual recruiters to see if they could remember whether 'Other' meant 'wrong timing' or 'cold feet' or something else entirely. That ultimately didn't provide us with good data, so we couldn't make quarter-to-quarter shifts based on real intelligence.

Now, the moment I see an 'Other, I can check in and ask what the unique reason was for the decline. What that means is real-time fixes and pivots. If career growth is an issue, I can say, Hey managers, make sure you're talking about growth opportunities with candidates from the very start of the conversation. When we have a clear idea of why candidates are opting out, we have a clear idea of what to lead with from first contact.

Suggested communication cadences:

- Recurring meetings—weekly or biweekly—to check in. (Even if you don't use these *every* time, it's nice to have a spot saved on the calendar for building rapport or talking about the business.)
- Weekly emails to the business regarding funnel and traction
- Regular recalibration meetings between clusters of candidates to ensure everyone is on the same page



Gem's Talent Pipeline organizes all your active ATS candidates into a single Kanban board, grouping them by stage-in-process and operating as an interactive and collaborative hiring dashboard. Users can quickly access key details of each candidate (current role and company, attributed source, assigned recruiter, submitted scorecards, ATS profile, and more) and take action on them: rejecting them with templated emails, messaging them directly from the view through email or text, or drag-and-dropping them into the next stage. All changes made in Talent Pipeline will automatically sync to their ATS.

With a consolidated view of all active candidates, Talent Pipeline equips recruiters to come prepared for their weekly syncs, help HMs visualize their pipelines, quickly flag who needs immediate attention, hold the hiring team accountable on the spot, and manage candidates—all from one view. Talent Pipeline also automates report sharing: users can customize reports that send at a cadence of their choice, keeping HMs up-to-date.

Course Hero

Thoughts from Jassi Kaur

Senior Technical Sourcer

The initial step before bringing in prospective employees for an interview at Course Hero is a kickoff meeting with the Hiring Manager and Recruiter. To prepare for this, I use the job description as a guide for my research, and I select 5 to 10 profiles that I think may be a good match. During the kickoff meeting, we discuss details about the role including must-have and nice-to-have skill sets, as well as which target companies/industries to source from.

This meeting is also about uncovering the ideal candidate in a creative way. Some questions I ask during the meeting include: Why will this role be exciting for the candidate? What value does it bring to the company? How will the work advance our mission and vision? I don't ask what the ideal candidate *looks like* because the Hiring Manager almost always will have a specific person in mind. We don't want to be limited by that vision, as it could exclude someone who might be the perfect fit.

Next, I typically share the profiles that I selected prior to the kickoff meeting. I love going through profiles "live" with the Hiring Manager and Recruiter to get instant feedback on whether those profiles are aligned with the role. I really pay attention to facial expressions and body language. I learn a lot from those cues, even with Hiring Managers who have clearly articulated their ideal candidate.

No matter how well-defined the candidate or the role is, though, I stress the importance of constant communication between myself and the Hiring Manager and Recruiter. The job description alone may not be enough to find the perfect match. What if the talent pool isn't in this geographic area? What if the candidate doesn't have a Master's degree but has years of experience? Those kinds of questions are why I ask for constant feedback through Gem's Hiring Manager Review and why I have daily Slack conversations with my Hiring Managers throughout the rest of the process. Some of the most useful communication happens face to face. They'll come to my desk and say, "That candidate you just sent me was good, but they were missing X."

> Questions I ask during the kickoff meeting include: What value will this role bring to the company? How will the work advance our mission and vision? I don't ask what the ideal candidate *looks like* because the Hiring Manager almost always has a specific person in mind. We don't want to be limited by that vision.

This constant feedback loop has two benefits: I get a better sense of what Hiring Managers are looking for, and they get a better sense of what the talent pool looks like.

7.
Calibrate the Gaps

Educate hiring managers on what makes an effective interview question. Suggest they check out an unconscious bias training. Teach them how to negotiate a salary. And so on. Most hiring managers fall into that role by accident, and they're not trained on these aspects of hiring. This is a great way to be a strategic partner.

We've discussed bringing data to hiring manager syncs and educating them on various aspects of the market and your talent pool as it relates to the market. But hiring managers might need training in other aspects of the hiring process as well. These include:

Interviewing. Hiring managers don't necessarily come into their roles with interview experience. So walk them through the process. Educate them on what makes an effective (and what makes an *in*effective, and what makes an illegal) interview question. Share examples of some of the best interview questions you've seen, and some of the worst. Point out red flags HMs should be on the lookout for in candidates' answers, and clarify what they might expect from candidates' responses.

Your best bet is to nail down the specific interview questions they'll ask ahead of time. What do "bad," "passable," and "excellent" answers to those questions *look* like? If you're in a position to help the executives at your company see the importance of making interview training mandatory (and of making *standardized* interviews mandatory!), do so.

Recognizing bias. We've all got biases. As a recruiter, you've hopefully been working to make yourself aware of your *own* throughout your career. This may not be the case for the hiring managers you're working with. There are some things you can put in place—structured interviews, for example—that help ensure your HM focuses on the things that matter and compares candidates objectively when they're interviewing.

But you might also consider giving them data to break down preconceived notions (that a candidate's educational background is actually one of the *worst* predictors of job performance, for example). You might walk them through your realizations of your own unconscious biases, or give them anecdotes of when you were proven totally wrong about a candidate. You might even go so far as to suggest they check out an unconscious bias training—at Paradigm, Archetype, or elsewhere.

Improving the overall candidate experience. There's the interview, yes. But there's a whole lot more to the hiring funnel than that. Does your hiring manager know the nuances of how to sell candidates on your company? Do they know how to write a JD that both distills what they're looking for and inspires prospective candidates to apply? Do they know how to negotiate a salary? Do they understand the impacts of a bad candidate experience, and how quickly candidates will drop out of process if they're not thrilled with it?

Note that this "training" may require some tough love on your part. If your HM has become a bottleneck to the process because they're not getting back to you, send them a note that says, 'Hey, Head of Engineering, it's been a week and I still haven't heard from you about the candidates. I've got these other hiring managers I'm working with who are responsive; and I'm going to prioritize their reqs until you've got time to really partner with me on your hires.' Remind them it's for their benefit. A bad candidate experience loses you more than just that one candidate.

So there you have it: 7 ways to more strategically collaborate with your hiring managers. If you're not feeling great about your current relationships with your HMs, we recommend reaching out to them this week to put some time on the calendar to chat. Maybe you send them this resource and let them know you'd like to discuss how you can start building a better strategic partnership with them. After all, your hiring depends upon it.

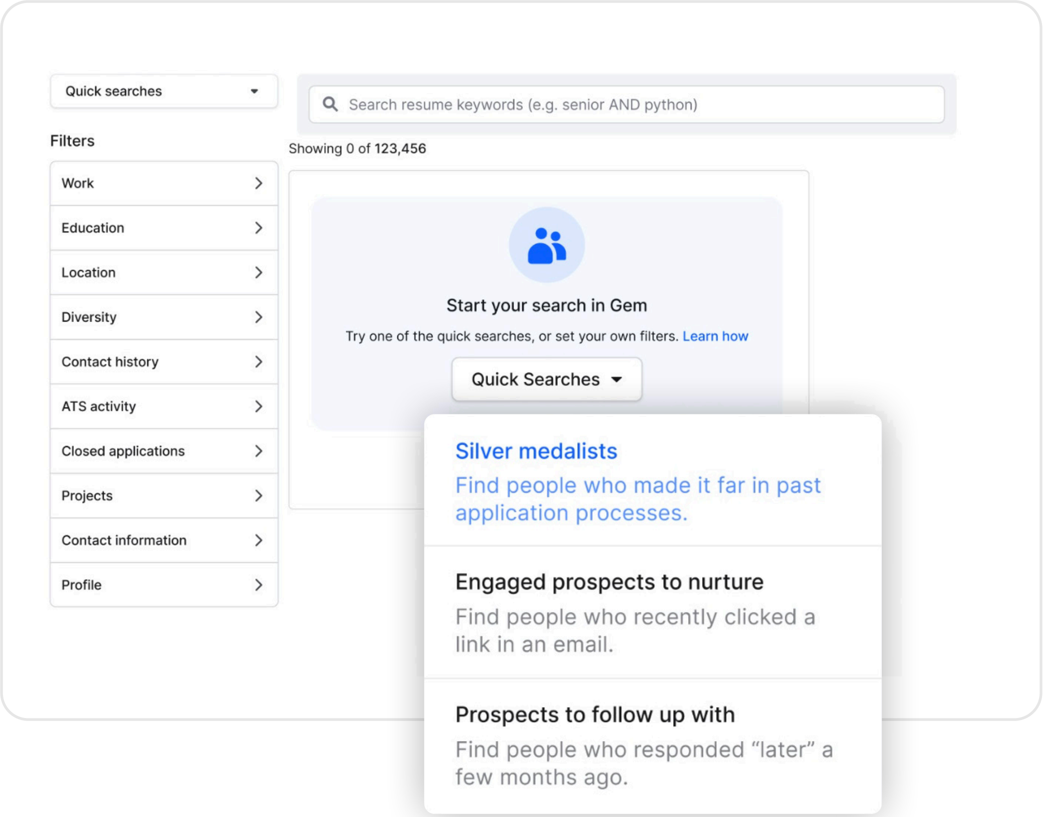
How Gem Can Help

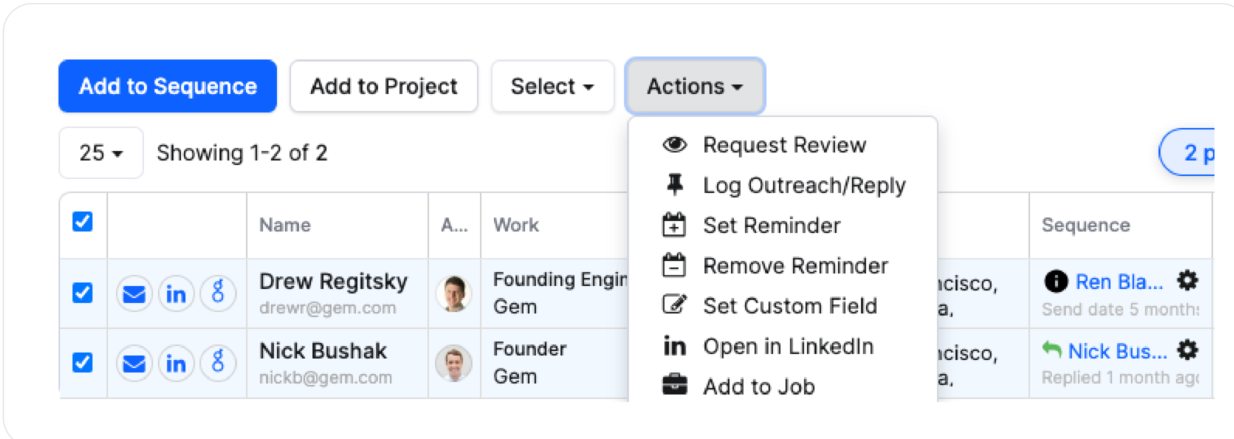
At Gem, we understand that if there's a pair that needs to come together as a power duo to make any given hire happen, it's the recruiter and the hiring manager who oversees the team with the open role. We've built our product with that relationship in mind. Doing so has meant focusing on four core elements: speed, communication, collaboration, and visibility. Here's how our features support those elements:

Prospect Search & Candidate Rediscovery

Your hiring managers want their reqs filled as quickly as possible; and your likeliest strategy for reducing time-to-hire is to have a ready talent pool. So stop sourcing from scratch, and reach out *first* to the talent you've already initiated relationships with, or who's already bought into your organization. Gem allows you to search your entire CRM and ATS for previous candidates—silver medalists for example, or prospects who clicked into a piece of hyperlinked content but didn't respond to your outreach.

You can filter on almost any attribute: job, department, demographic, hiring stage reached, rejection reason, interview feedback, and so on. Then quickly add those prospective candidates to a sequence and send. Gem will auto-personalize each email with refreshed data from that person's LinkedIn profile.



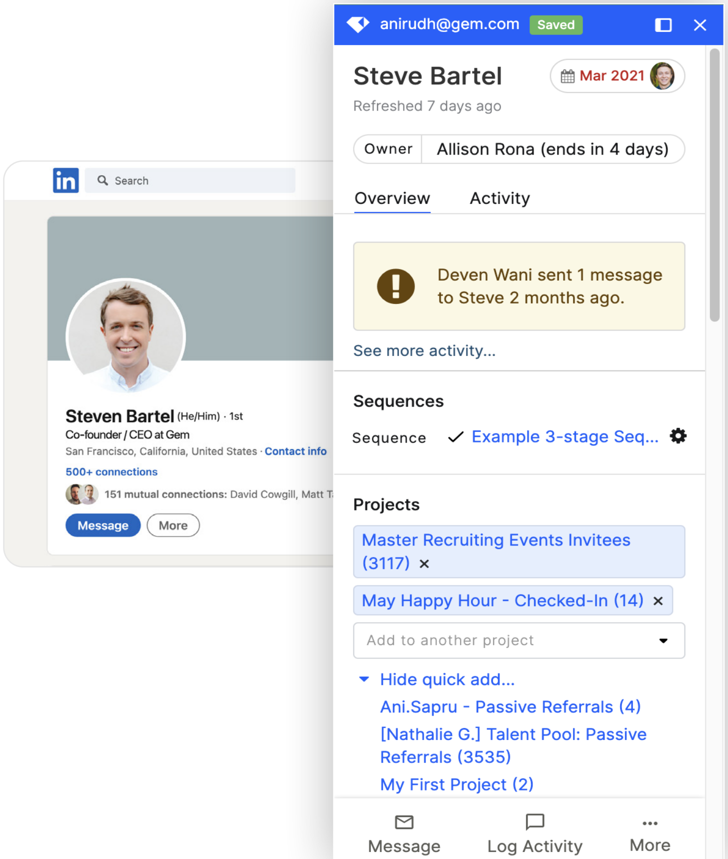


Resume Review

Gem's Resume Review allows talent teams and hiring managers to calibrate on profiles from the very beginning, so recruiters can better understand what their hiring managers' ideal candidate looks like. With Resume Review, the picture becomes clearer for recruiters, because hiring managers are asked to articulate what they're looking for or why a particular prospect is not very compelling to them from the beginning.

When a recruiter submits batches of prospects for a hiring manager review, the manager will get an email from Gem with a direct link to the review section of Gem. Hiring Managers can quickly flip through the book of resumes and approve or reject as they go, leaving more detailed notes on each profile if they wish.

Those notes are logged in the prospect's Activity Feed in Gem, so everyone else on the team can benefit from that context the next time they're on that person's profile. Recruiters can then quickly add everyone who was approved directly to an outreach sequence.



Outreach

Top-of-funnel visibility. With Gem's Activity Feed and Rules of Engagement, hiring managers don't have to worry that they're stepping on recruiters' toes if there's someone they want to reach out to. Hiring teams can see all prior interactions and follow up with appropriate context, offering a seamless candidate experience and representing the company in a unified, professional way.

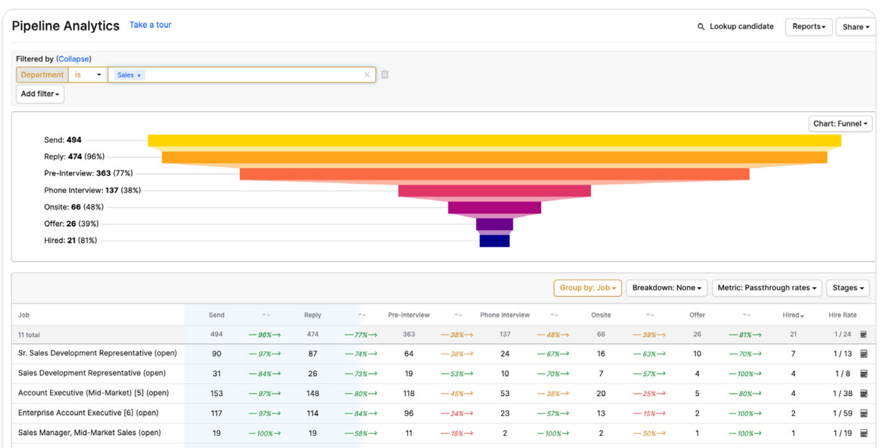
Send-on-Behalf-of (SOBO). Sending on behalf of a hiring manager has been shown to double response rates for email sequences. (In fact, some of our customers have *quadrupled* response rates with this feature.)

SOBO allows recruiters and managers to collaborate on outreach to whatever degree the hiring manager wants to be involved. Email aliases allow the recruiter to directly handle replies—though it *looks* like the outreach came from the HM. Alternatively, prospect replies can go directly back to the hiring manager's own inbox, who then takes charge of the correspondence.

Talent Compass

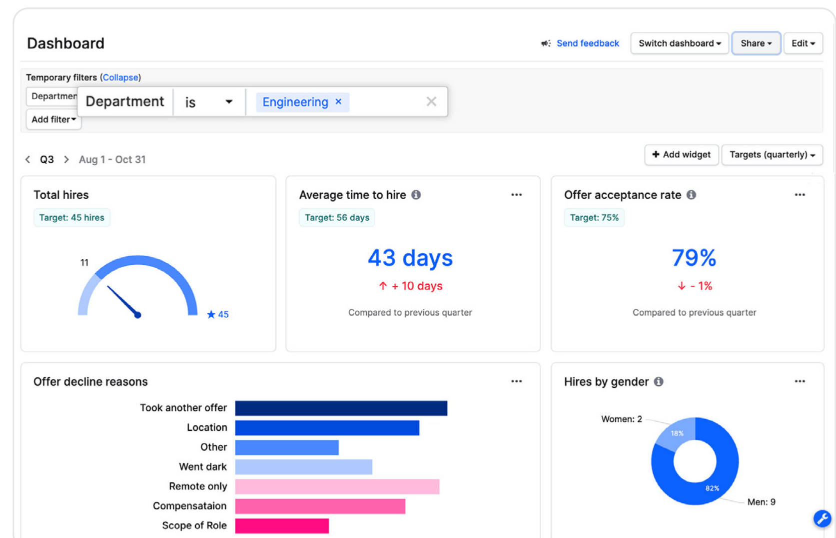
For TA teams looking for insights that offer strategic guidance, Gem offers Talent Compass. Talent Compass is equipped with full-funnel visibility, hiring forecasts, performance metrics, and executive reporting that teams use to plan ahead and collaboratively guide their recruiting strategy.

Pipeline Analytics. Gem's Pipeline Analytics gives hiring managers ongoing visibility into the activities happening at *all* stages of the funnel, empowering them to feel like they're part of a process they can see and understand. Passthrough rates pinpoint where candidates are falling out of process or where they get stuck in holding patterns, so recruiters and hiring managers can work together on optimizing those parts of their funnel.



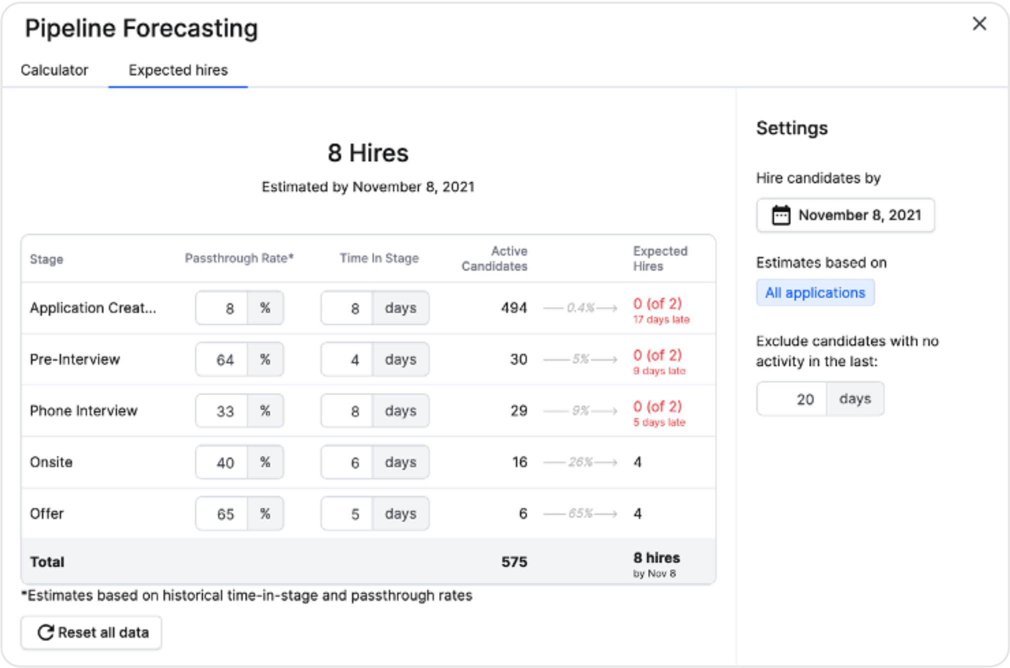
Dashboards. Within Talent Compass, users can launch configurable, presentation-ready reports to visualize KPIs. With easily-digestible metrics on hand, talent acquisition teams can come to hiring manager meetings prepared to discuss how they're progressing and where there are opportunities to improve.

Within dashboards, managers can even create widgets with specific metrics for their individual recruiters (e.g., phone screen to interview ratio, offer acceptance rate, etc.), serving as a performance scorecard.



Forecasting. Talent Compass includes a forecasting calculator that projects not only how many hires you can expect to make, but also by *when*. This can be forecast at the individual job req or aggregate level (i.e. department). Passthrough rates and time-in-stage are based on historical data, but can be adjusted. This is particularly useful when teams want to understand the impact of potential process improvements.

The calculator also works backwards: users can input the final number of hires they would like to make and the calculator will output the number of candidates and applicants required at each stage in order to meet final goals. This feature is particularly useful for teams looking to capacity plan in the face of ever-changing hiring goals.

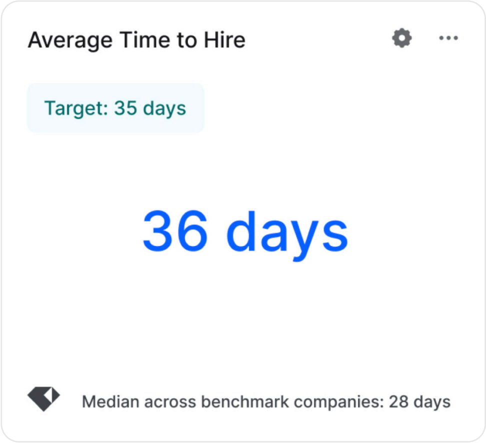


Stage	Passthrough Rate*	Time In Stage	Active Candidates		Expected Hires
Application Creat...	8 %	8 days	494	0.4%	0 (of 2) 17 days late
Pre-Interview	64 %	4 days	30	5%	0 (of 2) 9 days late
Phone Interview	33 %	8 days	29	9%	0 (of 2) 5 days late
Onsite	40 %	6 days	16	26%	4
Offer	65 %	5 days	6	65%	4
Total			575		8 hires by Nov 8

"We've tried everything and Gem is the first product to delight our hiring managers. Now, everyone's involved in the hiring process—our entire company is an extension of the recruiting team!"

Tido Carriero
SVP, Twilio Engage GM @ Segment

Peer Benchmarks. Gem's customers can review their recruitment metrics side-by-side with comparable benchmarks (offer accept rates, conversion rates, time-to-hire, and more)—right within their dashboard. Now talent teams can truly understand what good looks like, and how they compare.



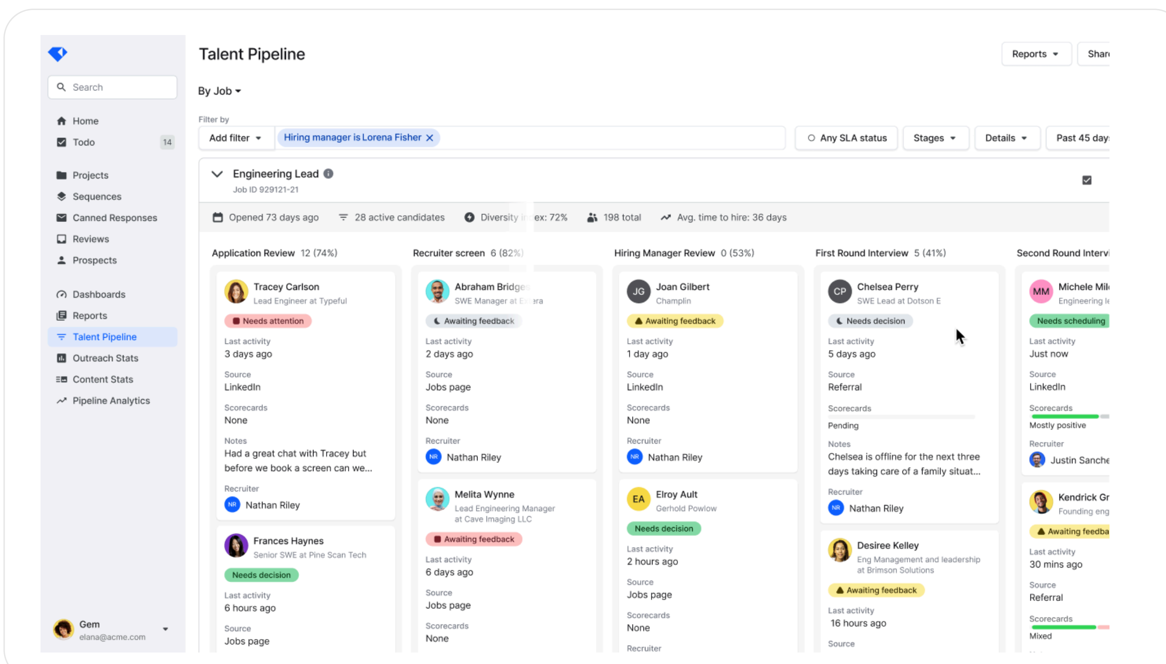
Talent Pipeline

Gem's Talent Pipeline allows recruiters and hiring managers to see all active candidates in a color-coded kanban board, grouped by stage-in-process. They also see which candidates require actions—whether by the hiring manager or the recruiter—which means recruiters don't have to ping their HMs reminders all the time.

Gem automatically surfaces candidates to the top of each stage based on urgency. From the candidate tiles, users can access key details, customize their view, and process candidates—with all actions automatically synced back to the ATS.

Talent Pipeline equips recruiters to come prepared for their weekly hiring manager syncs. They can offer quick digestible snapshots of their pipelines and then narrow the focus of discussion by filtering for the stages they want to show. Talent Pipeline also automates report sharing to ease the burden of keeping hiring managers up-to-date. Instead of manually gathering candidate information from every stage and sending it out, users can set up automated report-sharing through Slack, email, or a direct URL.

Talent Pipeline comes with SLAs that you can use to track, sort, and filter your candidates, ensuring you never keep a candidate waiting too long.



Lauren Shufran, Author

Lauren is a content strategist with a penchant for 16th-century literature. When she's not trying to tap into talent teams' pain points, she's on her yoga mat or hiking the hills of Marin County. Come at her with your favorite Shakespeare quote.

Gem's end-to-end modern recruiting solution empowers talent acquisition teams to engage their entire talent network, optimize sourcing efforts, and uncover actionable insights that guide smarter, forward-looking decisions. Gem works alongside LinkedIn and other places that you source, while integrating with Gmail, Outlook, and your ATS. Find the talent you need to meet hiring targets and scale your teams with Gem.

To learn more and see a demo, visit

gem.com