

CUSTOMER STORY



Pure Storage® Increases Productivity and Influences TA Strategy with Gem

Pure Storage is a pioneer in the IT space that's redefining storage-as-a-service in a multi-cloud world. The company develops flash-based data storage products and solutions for data centers with a unique business model: they were one of the first storage solutions to market to align spend with consumption—a model that allows customers to scale capacity to keep up with dynamic business demands. With a focus on simplicity-of-use, seamless consolidation of environments, maximum performance, and scalability, the company differentiates itself from other storage solutions on the market in its commitment to delivering a Modern Data Experience™. Founded in 2009, the company went public in 2015 after growing in revenue by about 50% QoQ. Its customers are among the industry's happiest, with a certified NPS score in the top 1% of B2B companies. And growth—in terms of revenue, customers, and headcount—hasn't slowed since the company's inception. "In fact, in terms of hiring, we went from 1-100... *just* at our new R&D center in Prague," says Angela Miller, Senior Director of Global Talent Acquisition and Ops at the company.

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Angela Miller

Senior Director of Global Talent Acquisition and Ops



Company Overview:

- Mountain View, CA (HQ)
- Storage-as-a-Service
- ~4,000 employees
- PureStorage.com
- ATS: Greenhouse

Goals and Objectives:

- Needed an automated messaging solution so as not to waste productivity cycles and to increase response rates
- Better visibility into metrics so the team could understand the success of their outreach campaigns
- Needed to track pipeline throughput to understand gender diversity, and for proof-of-concept for investment in sourcing

Results with Gem:

- The team can schedule automated, multi-stage campaigns rather than sending one-off emails, increasing response rates and improving prospective candidate experience
- Recruiters can test alternate messaging and compare outreach types, track opens and clicks, and leverage hiring managers' and execs' voices with send-on-behalf-of (SOBO), ultimately uncovering best outreach practices and optimizing for highest reply rates
- The team now has visibility into full-funnel recruiting stats across hundreds of dimensions including candidate demographics, enabling them to communicate to leadership a strategy around diversity in alignment with the reality of the market, and to justify more sourcing headcount

Despite the inbound application volume Pure Storage sees, Angela knew that a strong sourcing strategy was going to be critical to building and maintaining an extraordinarily innovative team. "As with any startup," she explains, "the majority of our first few hundred employees came from referrals. When I joined six years ago, Pure Storage was 400 people, pre-IPO. It wasn't long before we started seeing some downstream effects of the referral culture that weren't necessarily positive. If there was a sexy enterprise infrastructure play in storage, it was Pure. We were the disruptor. We were punching above our weight class, giving these huge, archaic institutions in our space a run for their money." Many are familiar with the pitfalls of relying too heavily on referrals, and Angela calls out one of the downsides from the perspective of a startup competing with huge, legacy incumbents: "With our reliance on referrals, we were just bringing in people from the industry—which, as disruptors, was the opposite of what we intended to do. It became evident to me at that point, as a TA leader, that we needed to think differently about how we were approaching our channels philosophy."

Angela received resources to build a sourcing team from the ground up "so we could surgically take talent from the market and shift those top five dinosaur competitors we were

“The difference between a great sourcer and a sub-par sourcer is in how much discipline someone has in following-up, in not wasting productivity cycles. Response rates on that initial outreach might be 15%, but they might be 50% on the follow-up. So the one thing I was looking for in a tool was automated follow-ups. We ran a free trial of Gem and the team loved it. Our sourcers were thrilled about things like send-on-behalf-of and Rules of Engagement. And I just saw productivity increase. So at that point, it was a no-brainer.”

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hiring from. Within nine months we were hiring innovative, progressive talent from top Cloud companies. It was talent that was more directly aligned with the company’s values and goals.”

It quickly became clear that the team needed a solution to better manage their outreach to passive talent. “The difference between a great sourcer and a sub-par sourcer,” Angela says, “is in how much discipline someone has in following-up, in not wasting productivity cycles. Less successful sourcers do a lot of work to generate lists of good pipelines; but then they reach out once and never follow up. Response

rates on that initial outreach might be 15%, but they might be 50% on the follow-up. So what are we doing if we’re not reaching out a second and third time?” The team initially onboarded another solution that Angela hoped would allow her sourcers to be less administratively-focused and more focused on building relationships with prospective candidates. “The one thing I was really looking for in a tool was automated follow-ups. Our first solution offered an automated follow-up notion along with a personal email aggregator; but after a year of using them, the data wasn’t good, their algorithm wasn’t good.” Angela describes creating a makeshift solution out of LinkedIn Recruiter, before she heard about Gem through word-of-mouth. “We ran a free trial and the team immediately loved it. Our sourcers were thrilled about things like send-on-behalf-of and Rules of Engagement. For me, the priority was automating their workflows. And I just saw productivity increase. So at that point, it was a no-brainer.”

Brian Wilhelm is a Senior Technical Sourcer on Angela’s team. “Before Pure Storage I was at LinkedIn,” he says, “so I could uncover technical talent wherever I wanted; but at the end of the day, my messages *had* to go out through InMail. That was our product, after all. So when I came to Pure and was shown Gem, I immediately thought, *Oh, this is a godsend*. I no longer had to send follow-ups manually or keep track of whom to follow up with on my own trackers.” Brian says he’s always delighted

when prospects respond to that second or third automated outreach, “because on my end, it feels like I’ve only sent *one*.” Kevin Coverson, a fellow Technical Sourcer at Pure Storage, agrees. “LinkedIn does have a follow-up reminder option on Recruiter. But there’s no solution for *tracking* that outreach unless you go the extra mile to make a spreadsheet and record your every action on it. That’s a time-consuming endeavor; and things are bound to slip through the cracks no matter how meticulous you are. *Now*, even if I decide to send an InMail to a prospect or reach out to them through our ATS, that activity gets logged in Gem’s Activity Feed. So it’s all right there.” Kevin says that not only can he dispense with the manual spreadsheets and the need for reminders, but he also gets to offer a better experience to the prospect. “Often prospects will finally respond to that third email and say, ‘Hey, Kevin, I’m sorry I didn’t see your first two messages, but I’m so happy you were persistent in reaching out to me.’ *Now* we get to have a conversation. And that’s someone I might not have remembered to follow up with otherwise.”

Kevin says that at the top of the funnel, the two biggest features he uses in Gem are Outreach Stats and send-on-behalf-of (SOBO). With Outreach Stats, “I can dig into my sequences in Gem and see who’s opening up my messages and how many *times* they’re opening them, versus who’s not opening them at all. That behavior is a great gauge of interest.” It’s data Kevin can use to iterate on and optimize all

“Send-on-behalf-of is a way of leveraging hiring managers’ names and, in some cases, their reputations, to see if we can get more responses; and they don’t have to do any of the work. Then I get to go into Outreach Stats and see: is this a strategy worth replicating? What ultimately piques talent’s interests?”

Kevin Coverson
Technical Sourcer

aspects of his outreach strategy. As someone who works on niche and hard-to-fill roles, Kevin also spends a lot of time collaborating with hiring managers, part of which entails going through their personal networks and writing messaging that Kevin then sends from those hiring managers’ email accounts, through Gem. “It’s a way of leveraging hiring managers’ names and, in some cases, their reputations, to see if we can get more responses; and they don’t have to do any of the work. That ties back to Outreach Stats, because I get to go in and see: is this a strategy worth replicating? What ultimately piques talent’s interests?”

Brian’s role requires a bit of a different strategy given that his roles are more high-volume than Kevin’s, but notes that “what’s so great about Gem is that it fills a need regardless of your role

in talent acquisition.” Brian sends tons of outreach in Gem, and while he leverages Outreach Stats in much the same way that Kevin does, he also says that one of its key value props is the visibility it gives his stakeholders: “Outreach Stats is a place for our managers to do a deep-dive while we get to keep doing the work we were hired for—getting that messaging out.” Managers can look at reports showing activity stats and productivity metrics, what sequences are performing best, and why, and then “come to us and say, ‘Here’s what the data’s showing. What if we make these specific tweaks to how we’re doing things?’ *That’s* where best practices come from.” Brian says that sourcers ultimately get to choose how proactive they want to be about digging into those stats themselves. “Some quarters there’s time for it. Others, I’m just getting those emails out; and—like Kevin said—when prospects reply back to that second or third email, I’m like, *Thanks, Gem, for doing that work for me.*”


“I needed Gem’s Pipeline Analytics because I needed to know why we weren’t hiring more women engineers. Was it a problem in our interview process? Because if so, we would fix that parity issue as a first step. With Gem, I’ve proven and been able to communicate that our interview process isn’t very biased. That was invaluable because it allowed us to dispense with one speculation and move on to others.”

Angela Miller

Senior Director of Global Talent Acquisition and Ops

After more than a year with Gem’s workflow product, the team at Pure Storage decided to adopt Gem CRM. “The reason was simple: I needed Pipeline Analytics,” Angela explains. She needed to track pipeline throughput and understand where the funnel wasn’t serving gender diversity as well as it could: “we wanted to know why we weren’t hiring more women engineers.” Debugging their eng funnel was a top priority, “and we needed insight into whether it was a problem in our interview process. Because if so, we would fix that parity issue as a first step.” What Angela discovered through Pipeline Analytics is that women and men engineers *do* experience similar passthrough rates at Pure Storage. “I’ve proven and been able to communicate that our interview process isn’t very biased. That was invaluable because it allowed us to dispense with one speculation and move on to others. What we discovered is that female engineering candidates are more difficult to get on the phone at the top of the funnel, and harder to close at the finish line. Diverse talent pools are the most competitive today, and differentiated experiences are where we need to put our attention.”


Angela then used this data to help inform a top-level goal for the team: “I made a top-of-funnel diversity gap metric for our sourcing team. Our litmus for success is to first *match*



the market, then beat it. If the market says that 25% of software engineers in the Bay Area are women, then the top of our funnel initially needs to be 25% women. And once we get there, let's go to 30%." Last quarter, Angela says, the team hit that 30% goal. "We're not saying we're going to get gender parity in our pipeline," she says. "We're saying let's do at *least* as well as mirroring what the market has available, and then pull other levers to increase diversity where we can. *That's* market intel; but we wouldn't know if we were matching it—let alone *beating* it—if it weren't for Gem's diversity metrics."

Gem also gives Angela and her team visibility into the passthrough rates of all hiring pipelines. "Kelsey [Farwell], my Operations Manager, actually relies on Gem for pipeline throughput and offer accept rates over our ATS now," Angela says. "When I'm like, *Hey, download a report from Greenhouse and tell me X, Y, and Z,* she'll send me a screenshot from Gem. The fact that her operating rhythm has pivoted to lean on Gem's Pipeline Analytics over our ATS speaks volumes about the accuracy and the reliability of Gem's data."

At this point, Angela says, "I can't imagine *not* having any of this data because we use it to know whether we're on the right track." And that's not just from a diversity perspective, but from a proof-of-concept and resources perspective. Angela pulls up a report to show distance traveled in the interview process per candidate across key channels, which shows Gem at 30%, referrals at 23%, and applicants at 4%—in other words, candidates who are sourced and nurtured through Gem get further in the interview process than referrals do. "It serves as an ongoing proof of concept," Angela explains, "proof of the return on investment for continuing to invest in sourcers. As we grow, we can justify more headcount for that function in TA. So those metrics are invaluable in explaining to Finance *why* this is where I want to leverage our headcount."



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Brian Wilhelm
Senior Technical Sourcer

"One interpretation of those numbers," Brian offers genially, "is that we have a remarkable sourcing team at Pure and we're really good at what we do." Kevin agrees, adding that "the difference between referrals and sourced candidates is often that referrers don't always look into the specific qualifications for a role before they refer someone. They see the job title, maybe they're in a different business unit entirely, and they offer up a name. As sourcers, we're crystal-clear about qualifications, about the impact the role will have. Sourcing necessarily entails strategy in a way referring *doesn't*."

As for Angela, she has a philosophy for why *all* companies need to invest in sourcing. "Sourcing enables long-term talent strategy," she says. "You start by asking the question: *What level of innovation do we need to take our business to the next level?* And when you

can identify specific talent pools that align with your business strategy, you can engage a unique set of individuals who have the power to elevate your entire organization. Sourcing is a more proactive, sophisticated, strategic model that allows TA to lead innovation and growth in alignment with company strategy at the highest level. *You* choose the talent you bring in the door, and you have more control over how you *manage* that talent through the life cycle. Unless you start with sourcing, you're just beholden to what the market's giving you. And that's not a proactive approach that I think *any* good talent leader is going to be okay with."

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



Gem is an all-in-one recruiting platform that integrates with LinkedIn, Gmail, Outlook, and your ATS. We enable data-driven, world-class recruiting teams to find, engage, and nurture top talent.