

CUSTOMER STORY

wheel

Wheel Uses Gem to Intentionally Build a Diverse Engineering Team

Wheel is a healthcare technology company and a platform that empowers clinicians and organizations to deliver high-quality virtual care, at scale. Using Wheel's infrastructure, companies can build care services under their own brands, and clinicians have a single site through which to manage their practices. Wheel's CEO and cofounder, Michelle Davey, has a background in talent acquisition. But when she joined a telehealth startup as Head of Global Talent, she discovered that building a workforce of clinicians was more difficult than building a workforce of engineers—and no one was looking out for the clinicians at the front lines. Wheel emerged from those discoveries, and COVID-19 confirmed what the team was building. In May of 2021—with thousands of clinicians already in its network, and having delivered nearly half a million patient visits—the company announced a \$50 million funding round to scale in a post-pandemic world.

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Greg Troxell

Senior Technical Recruiter

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Company Overview:

- Austin, TX
- Healthcare technology platform
- 125+ employees
- wheel.com
- ATS: Lever

Pain points / Challenges:

- No top-of-funnel data to share with leadership—especially as it related to diversity
- No visibility into what content and messaging resonated with certain demographic groups
- Diversity and hiring speed were mutually exclusive
- Long-term nurture wasn't feasible because follow-ups were manual

Results with Gem:

- Wheel's leadership sees diversity data regularly—from outreach and reply stats to how many reachouts the team needs to send if they want gender equity in their pipelines
- The team can test links and experiment with subject lines for different communities. Gem tracks recipient behavior, so recruiters can check their biases and write more compelling outreach.
- Wheel gets both diversity and speed: with automated outreaches, contact information served up, and auto-logged activity, time-to-hire has decreased
- Gem's nurture feature lets the team build rapport over time—especially with underrepresented talent, who might need more time to establish trust

"In my first six months here the team scaled from 30 to 100," says Greg Troxell, Senior Technical Recruiter at the company. Greg's principal goal when he joined Wheel was that the company would not sacrifice diversity in the midst of massive growth.

"When COVID hit, I asked the question a lot of us asked," Greg says: "What do I really *want*? I realized I wanted to move to an early-stage startup where I'd have leadership buy-in to build something from the ground up, and make diversity priority one." When Greg interviewed at Wheel, the org had a team of five engineers, with zero gender diversity and 1 Latinx engineer. "Chris [Norris, Wheel's CTO] told me he would consider it a personal failure if he didn't ultimately have a diverse team, *regardless* of the company's success." So Greg and Chris set an internal goal of 40% female representation. "We have an eng team of 23 now," Greg says; "and thanks in part to Gem, 29% of our engineers identify as women and 64% are underrepresented talent. We're still striving for that 40%; but we know this is a long game. And we need to celebrate sometimes. Because what we're doing is *working*."

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“What’s working” includes a lot of things: Wheel took degree and tech stack requirements out of its job descriptions. They incorporated bias trainings for their developers and went remote-first. And they put their focus on sourcing, because inbound wasn’t getting them a diverse pipeline. That’s where “Gem has shifted our strategy and radically reformed our pipelines for the better,” Greg says. “One of the first roles I saw at Wheel was for a Marketplace Operations role. EEOC data showed that out of 111 applicants for that role, 97% were White. You can put cultural things in place for equity and belonging, but underrepresented talent still needs to learn who you *are*. So now, for the first three weeks after a role opens, we only consider candidates from underrepresented groups. And we have a weekly sourcing jam in which we only source passive talent—for me, that’s engineers from underrepresented groups.”

Greg has been using Gem “since it was ZenSourcer.” He was a Senior Technical Recruiter at the talent firm Binc; and during his tenure there, he evangelized Gem with every client he contracted with. “I sold Gem to our CTO and CPO at Getaround,” Greg says. “Same thing at Zoox, then at DoorDash. The minute I’d dive in with a new client, I’d be like, hey, you want to uplevel your current team? Let me introduce you to Gem. Because I’m such a believer.” Wheel didn’t have the budget to invest in Gem when

Greg joined, so he paid for his own seat out-of-pocket. “I was like, you know what? I’ll just create my own company. That’s how confident I was that Gem would help me move the needle on the gender goal Chris and I landed on.” Five months later—having seen how well Greg was performing and how he could produce valuable reporting on DEI—the rest of the team invested. Leadership wanted to see the same results for each of Greg’s team members.

From a diversity perspective, Greg says, one of Gem’s most valuable features is gender and race/ethnicity stats for outreach. “It’s a great barometer to know how many female engineers I’m reaching out to—and down the line, how *many* I need to reach out to if I want gender equity in my pipelines.” But the feature that’s offered him the biggest learning curve is Outreach Stats. “As a recruiter, the million-dollar question is what content compels the demographics that you’re *not* a part of. With Gem, I test out links, I experiment with different subject lines. I made a Boolean builder for myself with underrepresented groups in tech. I use Gem to curate automated

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and personalized outreach to those communities. Gem tracks everything that happens with those messages, how they're resonating. Because *I* have biases, too. Gem calls those out in my outreach so I can correct, and learn, and be better. I've always been very data-driven, and Gem helps optimize my recruiting game—but it's deeper than that. In checking my biases, it's making me a more considerate human."


Greg reports Gem's data to leadership regularly—a practice that's become more important than ever in the wake of the pandemic. "During COVID, I watched friends and colleagues get laid off because their organizations didn't understand the value the talent function brings. So I've made it a point that wherever I go, I'm going to be so data-driven that I always have a seat at the table. *Every* call I have with our CTO, our Head of Product, our Director of Solutions Engineering, I'm giving them those metrics. Right now it's sourcing data, top-of-funnel data—though we just adopted Gem's Pipeline Analytics, and soon I'll have data all the way down the funnel to share. We'll be able to forecast, resource, share time-in-stage and conversion metrics, and optimize from there. If you're a CEO going into an investor meeting, you're not going to leave any information out. That's how I'm thinking when I meet with hiring managers,

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with executives. I want them to know *every* piece of the puzzle." Prior to Gem, Greg says, he didn't *have* a top-of-funnel piece to share, because it was all kept manually on a spreadsheet. And "it's difficult to be a true business partner if you don't even know if your manual data is accurate."

The top-of-funnel data Greg now has access to has had an unintended, but happy, side effect: hiring managers are learning how to better position themselves, and what they should be publicly engaging in to attract talent. "For example, Chris Norris recently did a podcast about tech at Wheel; we put that in our outreach and Gem tracked click-through rates. That behavioral data showed passive talent was more interested in that podcast than a *lot* of other things we've linked to in the past. I took that data to Chris and said, now we know you need to do more podcasts. Clearly this is a powerful talent attraction strategy for us. You see tangible results in Gem that literally inform your employer branding strategy. It's not like, well, my instinct says this is working, but I have nothing to show for it."

While diversity and speed can often be mutually exclusive, Greg says that Gem has given the team time *back* in many ways, and allowed them to put nurture campaigns in place that will continue to mean faster time-to-hire down the road. "So in some sense, we get the best of both worlds. We've made 38 hires so far with Gem, which is nearly a third the hires we've made since Gem was fully onboarded. That's a remarkable stat, given the entire team has only been using Gem for two months now. In part this is due to the efficiency Gem provides. Sourcers aren't crafting second and third outreaches because Gem automates them. They're



not searching for contact information because Gem serves it up. They're not manually tracking *anything* because Gem auto-logs activity. Time-savings is one of Gem's biggest ROIs." Greg says the other reason for the decrease in time-to-hire is that Gem allows for a nurture mindset. "Our team keeps an A-list and a B-list of talent who'd be an amazing fit for us, who seem to align with our values but who didn't respond to outreach. We nurture those folks. I can tee up a sequence in Gem with company updates to go out in three weeks, in three months, in six months. Those touchpoints over time allow us to build rapport with the folks we want to hire. That includes underrepresented talent, who might need more proof of our culture, more time to establish trust. In that sense, nurture is fundamental to a diversity strategy."

Greg acknowledges that there will always be more work to do when it comes to diversity—whether at Wheel or anywhere else. "That's the reason for weekly sourcing jams; *that's* the reason for proactive reachouts and nurture in Gem—I know it's a long-game. But to go from zero to 29% female representation, zero to 64% underrepresented representation in eight months, that tells me results with Gem have been about as instantaneous as you can get when your goal is organization-wide diversity." Greg says he's excited to see what Wheel will be able to do with the new visibility they'll have further down the funnel with Gem. "If we keep growing at the rate we're growing—and all signs point to that—we're just at the beginning of a crazy but beautiful ride. Gem is going to be a huge and critical ingredient in that growth for us. I can't wait to see where this partnership goes."

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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.