

# General Motors Hires Top Talent through Interview Scheduling Automation



the  
**joshbersin**  
company

# The Electric Future of Motor Vehicles Has Arrived

The General Motors Company is an American multinational automotive manufacturing organization headquartered in Detroit, Michigan. Originally founded in 1908, General Motors (GM) has been shaping the auto industry for over 100 years. From 1931 to 2008, the company was the largest automaker in the world. Today, GM operates in 30 countries under 12 brands, including Buick, Cadillac, and Chevrolet.<sup>1</sup> Since its establishment in 1908, the organization's achievements amassed more than just achievements in the automobile industry. Since 1920, the General Motors Research Corporation has developed products that advanced commercial and household refrigeration, made the world's first open-heart surgery possible, had wide application in the manufacturing of vaccines, and pioneered the forerunner of the computer operating systems we use today.<sup>2</sup>

As an organization that embraces the societal applications of technology, today, GM's workforce of more than 157,000 employees is bringing its vision of an all-electric future to the world through *electrification*, a term referring to the production of electric vehicles at scale. The company aims to create an environment with zero tailpipe emissions through a combined effort of technology and sustainability (see Figure 1). A key element of its strategy is the transformation of how it positions itself as an organization: "We're moving from being an automotive manufacturer to operating as a technology company," stated Eileen Kovalsky, Head of Candidate Experience at GM. To electrify the road, GM aims to attract top tech talent around the globe.

## Need for Speed: TA Bottlenecks Hinder Acquisition of Top Talent

To create the future of electric vehicles, GM recognized it needed to transform more than just its technology and

<sup>1</sup> [Toyota Ahead of G.M. in 2008 Sales](#), The New York Times, 2009.  
<sup>2</sup> [GM Heritage](#), General Motors, 2022

### Summary

#### Challenge

- Competing for sought-after talent from the technology industry to bolster innovation and sustainability efforts – a new talent pool for General Motors.
- Losing top talent prospects due to interview scheduling bottlenecks.
- Persuading hiring managers to participate in automated recruitment solutions.

#### Solution

- Developed an automated interview scheduling and candidate communication system in partnership with Paradox.
- Implemented a conversational AI assistant that schedules interviews for screened candidates within minutes.
- Leveraged internal change agents to foster hiring manager buy-in.

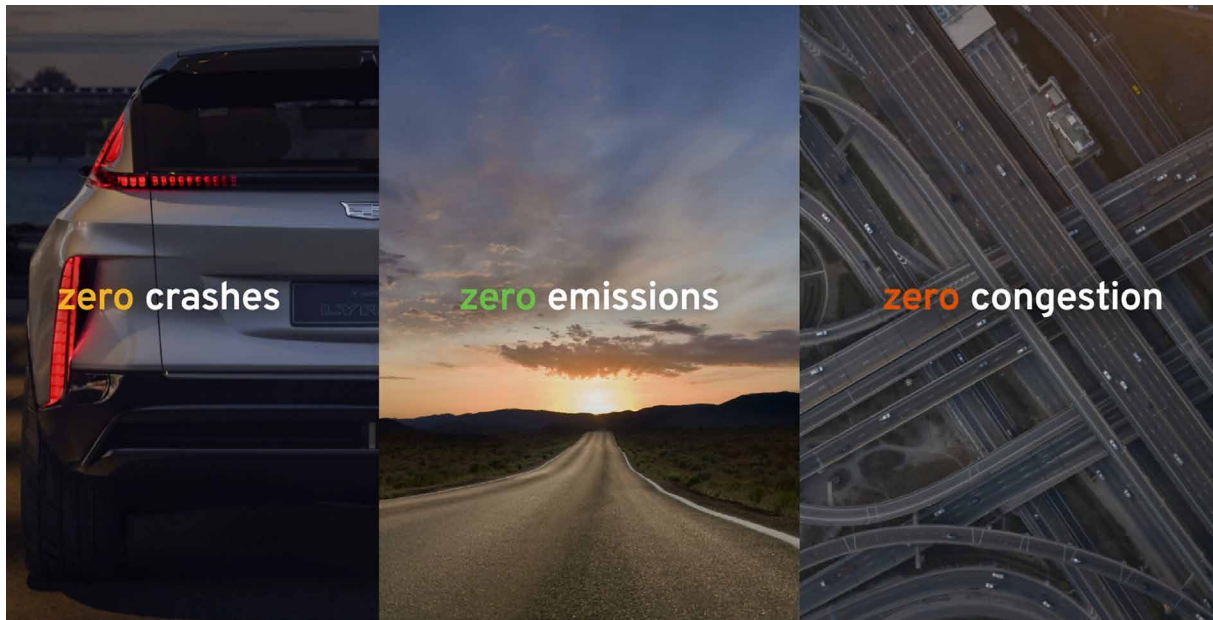
#### Results

- Time-to-schedule interviews have been reduced from 5 days to 29 minutes.
- Within the first year, GM saved more than \$2,000,000 in direct cost.
- TA automaton allowed GM to redesign the role of recruitment coordinators, which now includes more strategic TA responsibilities and built-in career development opportunities.

vehicles; it also needed to adapt how it hires and grows its workforce to become a player in the technology market. "Historically, we've never had to recruit the types of talent that Apple, Meta, and Tesla are recruiting for," shared Kovalsky. "Our competitors from decades or even three to four years ago are very different from who our competitors are today."



Figure 1: GM Transformation is Shaping our Electric Future



Source: General Motors, 2022.

Transformation of talent acquisition (TA) is an endeavor that GM began in 2021 after the organization had already streamlined its HR tech stack and implemented Workday (see Figure 2). “At GM, there had never been much focus on candidate experience,” explained Kovalsky. To productively

convert that focus into a competitive edge in the tech market, GM asked one simple question: “How do we take what’s 100% manual (and shouldn’t be), make it 100% automated—and still deliver better experiences for everyone?”

Figure 2: Recent HR Tech Evolution at GM

## To get there, how we hire and grow our team had to completely transform, too.



Source: General Motors, 2022.

In 2021, GM was receiving about one to two million applications each year and employed 55 recruitment coordinators to run its interview scheduling process. The company quickly identified a bottleneck at the interview scheduling stage (see Figure 3). “We spent so much time just going back and forth between hiring managers and candidates, looking at calendars and rescheduling,” shared Kovalsky, “We knew there had to be a better way.”

Figure 3: Key TA Challenges GM Faced in 2021

**1-2M**

On average, GM receives 1-2 million applications / year.

How can we possibly give every candidate a great experience?

**5+ days**

It was taking us 5-7 days to schedule a single interview.

What's that costing us in candidate conversion and cost-per-hire?

**55**

We employed 55 contract recruiting coordinators.

Do we really need employees to be responsible for mostly repetitive tasks?

Source: General Motors, 2022.

On average, it took GM 5-7 days to schedule a single interview, but the team didn't have the data to determine the cost in the candidate conversion rate or cost-per-hire. Furthermore, some GM positions require more than one panel interview, with each interview requiring coordination between the calendars of multiple managers who were potentially in different time zones or countries. “Scheduling often required hunting people down and talking to individuals about their blocked calendar. The process was quite cumbersome,” Kovalsky noted. Recognizing that contractors spent most of their day mainly doing repetitive tasks, GM sought an automation solution.

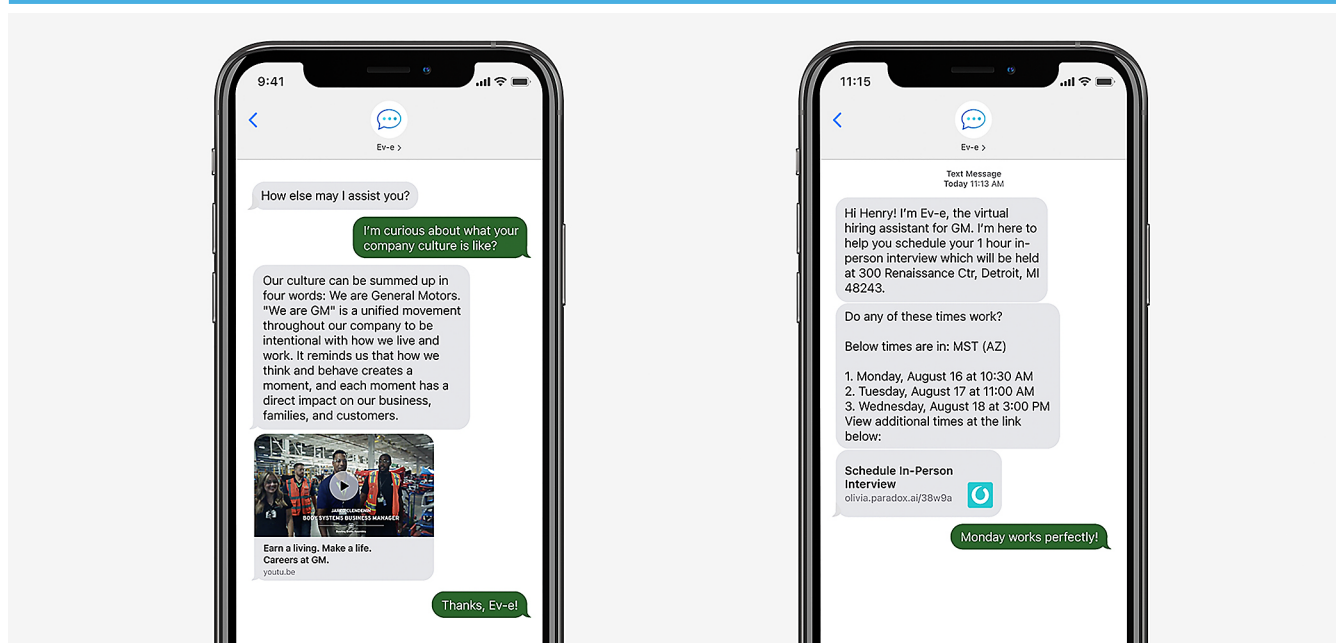
## Minimizing Time-to-Hire through Interview Scheduling Automation

TA leadership began looking for interview automation and career site conversational software. A key consideration was finding a solution that worked with the new GM system of record for people data. “Being a Workday partner was a core factor for us in our vendor search because Workday is our system of record,” shared Kovalsky. “We wanted to ensure that anything we were doing was seamless from the start.”

In June of 2021, GM partnered with Paradox. “The vendor understood our Workday infrastructure and could create a relatively seamless experience for us,” stated Kovalsky. The following December, the two companies introduced EV-e, a conversational AI assistant. EV-e, pronounced as “Eve-ie,” is a name explicitly selected by GM to represent its transformation and mission. “Our future is all-electric vehicles, so we named our new TA technology EV for Electric Vehicle. We added -e to round out the name,” explained Kovalsky.

At GM, EV-e is now automating the scheduling of nearly 50,000 interviews per year. In addition, EV-e provides candidates with 24/7 support across SMS, email, and WhatsApp communication channels. Even before candidates apply, EV-e is available on the GM career site, providing links to job recommendations based on a job seeker's chat messages. EV-e also answers candidate questions about GM's business, culture, and teams (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Ask EV-e about Business, Culture, Teams, and Jobs



Source: General Motors, 2022.

"Our candidates love the scheduling responsiveness," proclaimed Kovalsky. "Rather than waiting days for an update after submitting a resume or completing a phone screen, candidates immediately get a message from EV-e through their preferred communication channel that will offer up times and confirm their next interview. One of the things that we know about talent acquisition is that constant communication is a huge benefit." GM can now be more transparent in its hiring process, an asset to differentiate its candidate experience.

## Navigating TA Automation Through Change Management

Kovalsky's candidate experience team at GM is responsible for the whole TA tech stack, process governance, compliance, reporting, analytics, training, and change management. They regularly look at how all of these different processes and technologies can come together to create the best possible experience for not only GM candidates but also recruiters, hiring managers, and other internal stakeholders. The approach in which GM managed the adoption of EV-e evolved over time as the candidate experience team leveraged an open, agile mindset to improve the user experience of all involved.

Initially, GM put the onus of change management on the recruiters so that managers could have their questions addressed immediately in a 1:1 setting. Given that EV-e creates multiple efficiencies that benefit the manager, such as eliminating back-and-forth scheduling emails and filling open seats quicker, GM anticipated that EV-e would be a welcomed relief. However, given that GM was still navigating a pandemic-induced transition to remote work, some unexpected challenges presented themselves.

"We underestimated the level of change that was going to be required. While recruiters were equipped with EV-e training, manager buy-in varied widely across the organization. In the shift from being fully on-site to primarily remote, calendar management became difficult. Our hiring managers are often double or triple booked, so naturally, the primary driver of the pushback we saw from them was a fear that leaving open time on their calendar for EV-e to detect interview availability would result in people booking over that time," shared Kovalsky. "Plus, every recruiter's level of comfort with having conversations about change is different, and it's likely to vary depending on the hiring manager they are speaking with." To address hiring managers' calendar concerns, GM recognized a need for unified, proactive, and top-down communication. A new approach was required.

Seeing that some managers were eager to use EV-e, the candidate experience team began connecting with recruiters who had been successful in getting hiring managers to buy into the automation tool. These recruiters were invited to spend time with Kovalsky and her team regularly so that they could continuously share their best practices. Particularly, two recruiters from different parts of the business had high output and were also top users of the EV-e assistant. The candidate experience team immediately transformed the two use cases into documented stories and began developing training aids tailored to hiring managers. “We’ve been really leveraging those two recruiters’ experiences; that’s how we won reluctant hiring managers’ confidence to utilize EV-e,” shared Kovalsky. “One of the most difficult hiring managers in one of our business units went from ‘I will never use EV-e’ to ‘I will never not use EV-e.’ Kovalsky’s team used transparent, top-down communication to get managers to try EV-e once, as opposed to immediate buy-in, which was key to unlocking broad, long-term engagement.

As months passed, GM measured adoption rates monthly and tracked who was still using a manual process. “We asked ourselves, ‘how do we approach those people individually so that they feel better about doing something differently than how they’ve always done it?’ That mentality is one of the most challenging in the HR profession. Our lesson learned is that we should have started communicating change six months before EV-e was launched to socialize it within the organization,” shared Kovalsky.

“ *Our approach is very different now because change is here. If we want to bring the brightest and most talented individuals into our organization, we have to do something drastically different. This is how we are going to be able to compete with the competitors that were not our competitors three years ago.*

Eileen Kovalsky, Head of Candidate Experience at General Motors

Today, GM is refining its change management strategy to apply lessons learned from the EV-e implementation to future HR initiatives. “Before we’re even close to rolling something out, we’re socializing it. We’re putting snippets and information out there. We’re bringing recruiters to lunch and learn and

informational sessions so that they can start to understand solutions and socialize them even more. We’re talking at global HR calls about what’s coming so HR business partners can start talking to the business. Our approach is very different now because change is here. If we want to bring the brightest and most talented individuals into our organization, we have to do something drastically different. This is how we will be able to compete with the competitors that were not our competitors three years ago.”

## Change Management Lessons Learned

Throughout the implementation of EV-e, GM approached the situation with an open mind and identified key change management lessons that the organization continues to apply across the HR function.

- **Introduce change from the top down.** GM initially relied heavily on recruiters as the messengers of change to moderate results. When the company began driving communication strategically from the top down, leveraging the influence of senior leaders who approved of the change, they generated buy-in from even the most opposed.
- **Use proactive change management to address the “we’ve always done it this way” mentality.** Even with a tool designed to bring efficiency, optimize the hiring process, and fill positions quicker, some hiring managers at GM were resistant to the change brought by EV-e. That resistance eventually washed away when hiring managers experienced the benefits of scheduling automation themselves. Proactive communication that tied the changes asked of managers to expected results could have reduced the initial pushback.
- **Leverage individual contributors for change maintenance.** While GM found success in communicating change management from the top down, the company leveraged recruiters who had already successfully positioned the automation solution to hiring managers to gather lessons learned, which could be communicated broadly to other recruiters. Change management must combine clear, unified cross-company communication with expert knowledge of day-to-day operations. GM has achieved this by leveraging the expertise and influence of individual contributors. It’s a team effort.

## Results for GM Candidates, Employees, and the Business

In less than a year, EV-e has scheduled more than 47,000 interviews and drastically reduced time-to-hire. As a result of the automation solution, the average time-to-schedule to phone screens and interviews has been reduced from 5 days to just 29 minutes. “This reduction has been mind-blowing, especially when you consider some positions required multiple interviews,” exclaimed Kovalsky. “In some cases, hires have been made weeks faster than manual scheduling would allow.”

According to Kovalsky, EV-e has saved GM more than \$2,000,000 in direct cost savings and has positively impacted the career development of recruitment coordinators. Their work has completely transformed. Before EV-e, recruitment coordinators’ primary responsibility was to schedule interviews. While that remains part of their position for in-person or executive interviews, they are now exposed to new tasks that once took up most of GM recruiters’ time. “Our coordinators are much more involved with rehire validation, and they completely own our background-checking process. We are actively looking at other things they can do, such as conducting phone screens in high-volume recruitment areas and getting them involved in sourcing. We want to be open to what we can do differently to help develop our coordinators,” stated Kovalsky.

Automation of interview scheduling is having a cascading effect within GM. The company is more competitively positioned to recruit top talent, recruitment coordinator career development opportunities have expanded, and the TA team can focus more on strategic pursuits now that less energy is placed on manual tasks.

## Next Steps

Moving forward, GM is excited to think outside the box in partnership with Paradox. The automaker currently has plans to implement an enhanced automation module for its career site. The module will enable EV-e to pull up relevant jobs and open applications in response to conversations with prospective applicants. EV-e will also ask questions about basic candidate information and attach resumes to quicken the application process. Other advancements are being discussed as well. “Long-term, my vision is that EV-e will be the voice of talent acquisition from the time the candidates land on our career site to their first day,” shared Kovalsky. This goal includes equipping EV-e to send timely messages to keep candidates engaged and excited beyond the interview stage.

The potential of talent acquisition automation has also led GM to consider expanding its candidate screening, surveying, and feedback efforts. Implementing automated screening capabilities through the vendor would allow the company to work more accurately and effectively assess candidates across a greater number of technical roles. Automating feedback from hiring managers as well as internal and external candidates will enhance the company’s understanding of the candidate experience. While the company currently surveys employees, it looks to upgrade EV-e and create a continual process for measuring candidate satisfaction regularly. Doing so enables GM to update its recruitment practices efficiently and responsively, a critical capability for leveraging TA as a differentiator in the talent market.

“ *Long-term, my vision is that EV-e will be the voice of talent acquisition from the time the candidates land on our career site to their first day.* ”  
Eileen Kovalsky, Head of Candidate Experience at General Motors



## About the Authors



### Josh Bersin

Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Josh sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018.

In 2019, Josh founded the Josh Bersin Academy, a professional development academy that has become the "home for HR." In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world under the umbrella of The Josh Bersin Company. He is frequently featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. He is a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn.



### Jordan Schmitting

Jordan Schmitting joined The Josh Bersin Company as a senior research analyst after interning through the organization's Big Reset Initiative. Passionate about the intersection between behavioral sciences and the workplace, Jordan pursued a neuroscience degree before obtaining her master's in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is a certified HR professional and brings experience from multiple industries, including commercial real estate, industrial process solutions, higher education, transportation and retail.

## The Josh Bersin Company Membership

The Josh Bersin Company provides a wide range of research and advisory services to help HR leaders and professionals tackle the ever-evolving challenges and needs of today's workforce. We cover all topics in HR, talent, and L&D. The Josh Bersin Academy—built on our research and powered by Nomadic Learning—helps HR practitioners grow key foundational skills. Our corporate membership program provides HR teams and senior leaders with the skills, strategies, and insights to build cutting-edge HR and people strategies through a combination of research, assessments, professional development, exclusive events, and community. In 2022, The Josh Bersin Company introduced the Global Workforce Intelligence (GWI) Project to guide market-leading businesses and their leaders through the challenges of industry convergence while remaining future-focused.

For more details, contact us at [info@bersinpartners.com](mailto:info@bersinpartners.com).