# LEVER

# How LeverTRM for Enterprise Helps Hot Topic Reduce Candidate Drop-off by 300%

**800 Hours**
saved per week
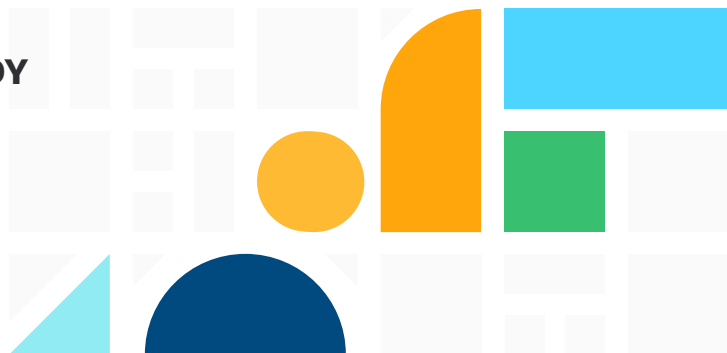for store managers

**300%**
lower candidate
drop-off

**1,500**
sales associates
hired per quarter

**CASE STUDY**

"Lever's integrations have made our recruiting process so much cleaner. They've saved us hours upon hours, and let us run a very lean recruiting team."

**Michelle Wentz,**
Director of Talent, Hot Topic

# HOT TOPIC INC.

## Hot Topic

Hot Topic is an American fashion retailer offering pop-culture and music-driven apparel. They employ over 10,000 sales associates in stores across North America.

## Products

**LeverTRM for Enterprise**

**Advanced Nurture**

## Highlights

### Challenges
- Reducing manager strain in high-volume hiring
- Delivering a Gen Z-friendly candidate experience
- Replacing inefficient email discussions with seamless collaboration

### Solution
- LeverTRM for Enterprise amalgamates data and streamlines collaboration
- Customizations let teams personalize their recruitment workflows
- Integration with Paradox enables a sleek application chatbot
- Scoring workflows help recruiters hire the best candidates, faster
- UKG sync eliminates hours of HRM data entry

### Results
- 800 hours per week saved for store managers
- 300% lower candidate drop-off
- 1,500 sales associates hired every quarter

# Challenges

## Streamlining the process for intensive hiring

As a shopping mall icon for pop-culture fans across North America, Hot Topic never stops hiring.

Director of Talent Michelle Wentz leads a team of just six professionals who support the hiring managers at more than 800 stores. To maintain 10,000+ sales associate positions across the chain and its sister store, BoxLunch, they make 1,500 hires each quarter.

With such a high volume of recruiting, the inefficiencies in their old ATS were creating major headaches.

> Michelle says, "The old ATS didn't have automation or note-keeping capabilities. Every time we reached out to a candidate or wanted to share our notes with the hiring manager, we had to type an email."

The email clutter added up fast. With chains of four or five messages to discuss every open role, recruiters had to wade through hundreds of emails each week. Circling back to revisit notes was a nightmare.

## A frustrating candidate experience

The lack of functionality prevented managers from customizing their applications, making it a challenge to find settings that fit the unique needs of headquarters, distribution centers, and store recruiters.

And it made the candidate experience slow and frustrating across the board.

> Michelle says, "The application process was very archaic and time-consuming. Our demographic is 16–24 years old, and they're not going to sit there and fill out an application for 40 minutes."

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## Struggling to fill positions

The unfriendly applications led to high candidate drop-off rates. As many as 80% of hopeful team members were abandoning the process, leaving Hot Topic's hiring managers to scramble through more exhausting rounds of inefficient recruitment.

> **"**
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> **"We wanted something that was quick, easy, and really focused on the candidate experience. Lever met those needs as well as unique requirements for our HQ, distribution center, and store hiring teams."**

# Solution

## A flexible and candidate-friendly ATS

When Michelle discovered [LeverTRM for Enterprise](#), she knew it was the perfect solution to make life easier for Hot Topic's hiring teams.

She and a colleague presented a business case to leadership, emphasizing how much time it would save if they weren't losing great candidates because of onerous applications.

> "Our CEO is big on candidate experience. Once we showed him the ease of use, he was sold," she says.

## Customizing recruitment for different settings

With each hiring team having different automation needs, Michelle and her colleagues were thrilled to discover LeverTRM's customization options.

> "It was very hard to find an ATS that worked for our stores, HQ, and distribution. But Lever allowed each hiring manager to customize their job descriptions, the approval process, and the way that candidates move through stages."

## Delighting applicants with chatbot integration

For Hot Topic's candidate experience, the biggest game-changer was syncing LeverTRM with Paradox, an AI assistant that saves time for applicants and recruiters.

Michelle and her team used the integration to build a chatbot that turned their long, frustrating application into a quick and easy conversation.

> "Our chatbot's name is Alex. She asks a series of questions that help us get to know a candidate, like 'Do you have any customer service experience? Have you worked in retail before? And What's your favorite band?'" she says.

## Advanced Automation helps teams hire faster

Advanced Automation, included in LeverTRM for Enterprise, uses the Paradox chatbot responses to instantly sort candidates into disqualified (e.g., if an applicant is under 16), benched, and top candidates.

Meanwhile, Advanced Nurture turns the old process of endless one-off emails into templates they can effortlessly personalize and send out at scale.

> Michelle says, "Before, we would have to write out a rejection letter every time we wanted to DQ a candidate. Now, we can just highlight everyone and click 'reject'. It's literally saved us hours on the recruiting end."

## Data amalgamation accelerates collaboration

Switching to LeverTRM for Enterprise also created a single source of truth for the whole recruitment process. Instead of wasting time scrolling through thousands of email replies to review notes on a particular candidate, every member of the hiring team can simply click on the candidate record.

Additionally, by customizing data fields to sync with their UKG HCM, they've completely eliminated the manual work of inputting data for new hires.

> "The systems speak to each other very well," Michelle says. "Now, when we hire someone, all we have to do is confirm all of their information is correct in Lever. It's very seamless."

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> **"Some of our stores get thousands of applicants. LeverTRM makes the best candidates bubble up to the top so we can reach out to them first. It's been the biggest time saver for our high-volume roles."**

# Results

## 800 hours per week saved for store managers

By switching to LeverTRM, Hot Topic's hiring teams have significantly streamlined their recruitment processes.

With the chain hiring 1,500 sales associates each quarter, those efficiencies add up to an astounding 800 hours per week saved for store managers.

> Michelle says, "We have 800 stores, and they do a lot of hiring. The email templates and data sync with our HRM are saving each store manager 1-2 hours per week."

The hours that recruiters used to spend individually contacting candidates and collaborating via messy email chains are now being put to more valuable use.

## More applications and a beeline to the best

LeverTRM's Paradox AI integration was an unmitigated success. The application chatbot improved the candidate drop-off rate by 300%.

Even with significantly more applications in the pipeline, hiring managers are less stressed. They only process the top candidates, thanks to automatic scoring and sorting workflows.

> Michelle says, "Apparel is a unique space. We're very nimble, and we need our HR solutions to be the same way. Lever lets us flex and customize our approach to grow faster."

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