

HIRING
SUCCESS
STORY

SmartRecruiters



FRASERS
GROUP

The Goldilocks Zone:
How Frasers Group Automated High-Volume Hiring at a Human Pace with AI

About Frasers Group

Frasers is a retail and intellectual property group with a collection of the world's most iconic brands, including Sports Direct, House of Fraser, Frasers, FLANNELS, GAME, Jack Wills, Sofa.com, Evans Cycles, USC, and Everlast.

Global

REGION

30,000

EMPLOYEES

- Industry: **Retail**
- Headquarters: **London**
- Locations: **1500+ stores in UK, 20+ countries**
- Hiring Model: **Decentralized**

Challenge

- Used an outdated system built for job advertising
- Desire to future-proof the business
- Need to make it easy for multiple business lines and seasonal high volume

Solution

Full-scale hiring process redesign included:

- Branded job templates and candidate emails to facilitate automated processes
- SmartRecruiters AI to identify best-fit candidates
- SmartCRM to engage candidates in a competitive market

Results

- **20,000** hires per year from over **1 million** applicants
- **50%** fewer ads
- **25%** fewer candidate drop-offs
- Time to hire reduced to **9** days from 23 days
- **40%** of seasonal hires from SmartCRM
- **50%** reduction in first-month churn



Challenge

Full-scale hiring process redesign

In the fairy tale, “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” Goldilocks tastes three bowls of porridge, sits in three chairs, and tests three beds before choosing the one that’s “just right.” After choosing SmartRecruiters to replace its outdated hiring system, Frasers set about building out new processes for high-volume retail hiring. The retail group applied the Goldilocks principle of getting the process “just right” to meet the needs of three constituents: hiring managers, HR, and candidates.

Adam Reynolds, Head of Talent at Frasers Group, described the company’s journey to the hiring process redesign this way: “TA acted as a mediator between the competing factions of HR on one side, retail operations on the other, and candidates on the other. Each party had really strong cases and a genuine reason for their position.”

The numbers and the needs of the business guided Frasers’ next steps. “It just wasn’t possible to get a million applications down to 20,000 hires by reviewing every application,” Adam said. “We needed to **expedite the process**, but we also needed to **maintain the quality standards.**”

“ We chose SmartRecruiters for how **simple it would be** to use across a wide stakeholder estate with a lot of moving parts. ”

Adam Reynolds
Head of Talent
Frasers Group

The Solution

AI & automation amplified with a human touch

Automated workflows in SmartRecruiters and an AI-based candidate filtering tool helped Frasers Group streamline hiring. “SmartRecruiters AI gives us a systematic, automated method of sifting and selecting to create an over-indexed **shortlist of pre-qualified candidates** that our stores can use to get people booked in for interviews,” Adam said.

Pre-hire assessments, SLAs with hiring managers, automated interview scheduling, templated communications, and 48-hour windows for moving people forward allowed the team to reduce the hiring process to just **9 days** from 23. Not faster, not slower, but in the Goldilocks Zone: just right.

“ With the AI and automation inside SmartRecruiters, we can move through **high volumes of information** from a high volume of candidates in a systematic way. ”

Adam Reynolds
Head of Talent
Frasers Group



Adam Reynolds

Head of Talent, Frasers Group

Balancing candidate needs with the need for speed

“We had to make peace with some level of attrition at every single stage,” Adam said. “It’s critical to help applicants move at pace through the recruitment process and give them as little time as possible to find alternative options while balancing our need for **efficient and purposeful interviews.**”

While hiring managers may have wanted their selected candidates to start immediately, the team found that it could not force candidates to make a decision too quickly. “We need to give them that time to reflect, that human time to think about the job before they start,” Adam said. It turned out that the Goldilocks Zone for offer to start was 72 hours for seasonal retail roles. The choice to give candidates time to reflect upon the offer resulted in **25% fewer drop-offs.**

The Results

Continuous optimization brings continuous improvements

The first year with SmartRecruiters built confidence in the business. “Getting people to the shop floor quicker meant that commercially, we could hit our targets,” Adam said. “And the fast, smooth process positively impacted our EVP.” That year, in the midst of the pandemic, candidate volume increased by **40%** at a time when talent was scarce.

In the second year, SmartCRM helped Frasers Group find a new Goldilocks Zone. That year, **40%** of hires came from candidates already in the CRM, the time to hire dropped to **9 days**, and the cost per hire dropped to below 60 British pounds.

In the third year, the laser focus on optimization revealed improvements in retention and cost savings. First-month employee churn dropped by **25%**, and the overall churn rate dropped from 130% to 80%. The balance sheets saw significant cost savings, with **50% fewer ads** necessary to make the required hires.

Three years of continuous optimization yielded outcomes that were “just right” for the business: better **operational fit** for talent acquisition, more **confidence** in the team’s ability to hire for culture fit, and commercial impacts that include **reduced loss of trade** and time spent training.



Data-driven hiring

SmartRecruiters' reporting is essential to Frasers' optimization strategies. Adam offered sage advice for those wanting to automate to increase speed while maintaining quality. **"Data holds the key to recruiting excellence.** Pace is critical; if you get it right, you will also deliver quality. Improving pace must be balanced between automation and **building in time for the human touch,"** he advised.

If there's a Goldilocks Zone to sum up the use of AI and automation in talent acquisition, perhaps it's this: "There is a sweet spot between automation of communication and being systematic and robotic," Adam said. "People want to feel like they've been spoken to by a human and taken into consideration." That sounds "just right" to us.



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Need to speed up hiring for a high volume of candidates?

Get in touch with us for a demo today.

[Sign up for a demo](#)

About SmartRecruiters

SmartRecruiters powers Superhuman Hiring™ by freeing talent acquisition teams from legacy applicant tracking software, and equipping them with next-gen AI functionality. SmartRecruiters' platform serves as the hiring operating system for 4,000 customers, including Bosch, LinkedIn, and Visa. Companies with business-critical hiring needs turn to SmartRecruiters for best-of-breed functionality, world-class support, and a robust ecosystem of third-party applications and service providers.

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