

From 400+ Resumes to 5 Finalists

How AI Interviews Cut Through the Noise

A Talent Pronto Case Study



The Setup

An engineering team was falling behind on their product roadmap and needed to bring on three mid-level software engineers as quickly as possible. They posted the roles on their standard job boards and within two weeks had over 400 applications sitting in their ATS.

On paper, that sounds like a good problem to have. In practice, it was a bottleneck.

The hiring manager and a single recruiter were already juggling multiple open roles across the organization. There was no dedicated recruiting capacity for this hire. The hiring manager was spending over 10 hours per week conducting phone screens on top of their normal responsibilities, and even at that pace, they were only getting through a small fraction of the applicant pool each week.

The math was simple and discouraging: at 30 minutes per screen plus scheduling overhead, the team could realistically talk to 30 or 40 candidates before the process dragged past the six-week mark. That meant more than 350 applicants would never get a real conversation, and the team had no way of knowing which of those 350 might have been their best hires.

The Challenge

The cracks in the process were showing up in predictable ways.

Resume filtering was missing good people. The recruiter was doing their best to triage 400 applications, but without a deep technical background, they were relying heavily on keyword matching. Candidates who had the right experience but described it differently, or who came from non-traditional backgrounds, were getting filtered out before anyone with technical context ever saw their application.

Phone screens were inconsistent. When the hiring manager did get candidates on the phone, the conversations varied depending on the day. Sometimes they dug deep into systems design. Other times they ran short on time and stuck to high-level questions. Without a standardized interview structure, there was no reliable way to compare one candidate to another across the pool.

The timeline was slipping. Top candidates were not waiting around. Two strong applicants accepted offers elsewhere while the team was still working through their backlog. The hiring manager knew they were losing people to faster-moving companies, but there was no way to speed up without cutting corners.

Recent mis-hires were still fresh. Two engineers hired in the previous cycle had not worked out. One lacked the technical depth the team needed. The other was technically capable but struggled to collaborate effectively. Both situations cost the team months of lost productivity, and the hiring manager was determined not to repeat those mistakes.

The Approach

The team decided to try a different model. Instead of manually screening candidates through resume reviews and phone calls, they implemented Talent Pronto's AI interviewer to conduct structured interviews with every applicant.

Here's how it worked.

Every applicant received the same interview. Talent Pronto's AI conducted a structured, conversational interview with each of the 400+ candidates. The interview used STAR-style behavioral questions (Situation, Task, Action, Result) designed specifically for the role. Every candidate answered the same core questions, creating a consistent baseline across the entire applicant pool.

The interview covered more than technical skills. The questions were designed to evaluate three dimensions: technical knowledge relevant to the role, soft skills like communication and problem-solving approach, and culture fit with the team's working style and values. This was a deliberate response to the previous cycle's mis-hires, where technical screening alone had not been enough.

The AI scored and ranked every candidate. After each interview, Talent Pronto produced a structured scorecard across all three evaluation dimensions, along with a summary of the candidate's responses. The hiring manager received a ranked shortlist rather than a stack of resumes and scattered notes.

The Results

The difference was immediate and measurable.

All 400+ applicants were interviewed within days. What would have taken the hiring manager weeks of phone screens happened in a matter of days. No one was filtered out based on keywords alone. Every applicant got a fair shot.

The AI surfaced 5 standout finalists. Of those five, two were candidates the recruiter had initially passed over based on their resumes. One had a non-traditional background that did not match the typical keyword profile but demonstrated exceptional problem-solving and communication skills in the interview. The other had relevant experience described in terms the keyword filter did not catch.

Engineering time was recovered. The hiring manager went from spending 10+ hours per week on phone screens to reviewing a shortlist of five candidates with detailed scorecards already in hand. Their final-round conversations were focused, informed, and productive because they already knew what each candidate brought to the table.

The timeline compressed dramatically. The team went from posting to offer in under two weeks, down from the five-week average in their previous hiring cycle. None of the top candidates dropped out of the process because there was no waiting period.

The hires stuck. All three engineers hired through this process were still on the team and performing well at the six-month mark. The hiring manager attributed this to the structured interview process, which gave them confidence that each candidate had the technical skills, communication ability, and cultural alignment the team needed.

By the Numbers

Metric	Before	After
Applicants interviewed	~35 of 400	All 400+
Time from posting to offer	5 weeks	Under 2 weeks
Hiring manager hours/week on screening	10	Less than 2
Candidates lost to competing offers	2	0
Hires retained at least 6 months	1 of 3	3 of 3

Key Takeaways

Interviewing every applicant uncovers hidden talent. When you only screen a fraction of your applicant pool, you are making decisions based on incomplete information. Two of the five finalists in this case would have been overlooked entirely under the old process. The best candidate for the job is not always the one with the cleanest resume.

Structured interviews reveal what resumes cannot. STAR-style behavioral questions, asked consistently across every candidate, create a dataset that shows you what a great hire actually looks like for your specific role and team. You stop relying on gut feel and start making decisions grounded in evidence.

Speed and quality reinforce each other. The conventional wisdom says you have to choose between moving fast and hiring well. This case demonstrates the opposite. By removing the manual screening bottleneck, the team moved faster and made better hires because they had better information about every candidate in the pool.

Better process, fewer mis-hires. The structured evaluation of technical skills, soft skills, and culture fit addressed the exact failure modes from the team's previous hiring cycle. When you know what you are looking for and you measure it consistently, the quality of your hires goes up.