

# Real Estate Investment Trust Deal Defense Simulation, January 2026

*An executive team tested a simulation as a potential screening tool — running it informally with candidates as an experiment. What the transcripts showed made the case.*

## THE QUESTION

How do you know if a simulation is worth adding to your hiring process — before you commit to it? An executive team at a real estate investment trust set out to answer that question. They ran an informal test with a candidate to determine the efficacy of the approach. The candidate voluntarily took part in the scenario three separate times, with no feedback between attempts. The scenario was a finance and investment defense — convince a skeptical senior IC member to advance a \$3 million real estate acquisition.

## WHAT THE TEST REVEALED

The answer was yes — and the progression across three sessions made the case. In the first attempt, the candidate defended the deal entirely through descriptive language, leaving specific financial data unused. In the second attempt, numbers appeared, but a single concessive phrase — ‘you’re right’ — without a counter-pivot cost the session. By the third attempt, both patterns had been corrected, and the simulation was cleared with a score of 88.

## In Their Own Words

The candidate, a senior at Georgetown University, provided feedback on the simulation to the executive team and AI Friction Labs. Here is what she had to say.

“*I’ve enjoyed this a lot more than my class assignments. We have done very simple deal defense assignments, but obviously you don’t get live feedback and questioning on your judgement. I really like the ‘what if’ scenarios and questioning the projections I had done. For students, getting the practice in speaking up and defending your claims against someone grilling you is rare.*”

— Hollie Pardini, Georgetown University, Finance & Operations Analytics

## The Verdict

The tool demonstrated that it can surface the gap between surface-level deal knowledge and the ability to hold a position when challenged — a gap that resumes and interviews are poorly equipped to detect. As a screening mechanism, it generates role-specific performance data tied directly to the conditions of the job. As a pre-screening development tool, it gives candidates a way to self-prepare that produces a visible, assessable record. The firm now has the evidence it needs to decide whether to integrate the simulation into its hiring process — grounded not in theory, but in a concrete test of the tool itself.

# Defend Your Decision — Candidate Progression Data

3 sessions | Same simulation | No feedback between attempts | January 2026

<b>3</b> SESSIONS	<b>+43pts</b> SCORE GAIN	<b>88</b> FINAL SCORE
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## Score by Session

**Session 1 | 12:31 AM**    **45 / 100**

Defended the deal through adjectives only. Specific financial data went unused despite being in the briefing dossier. Collapsed under tenant credit challenge — relied on marketing language rather than analysis. Bot did not advance the simulation.

**Session 2 | 12:54 AM**    **53 / 100**

Numbers appeared for the first time: rent PSF, IRR, escalations. Critical failure: responded to pushback with 'you're right' without a counter-pivot. Cap rate sensitivity calculation contained a significant math error. Bot flagged both directly.

**Session 3 | 1:42 AM**    **88 / 100**

Recovered from a shaky opening. Held thesis under sustained pressure. Produced specific cap rate sensitivity (\$200K impact) when challenged. Did not waffle. Bot advanced the candidate to the full committee. Simulation cleared.

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*We ran an informal test with a potential new hire to see whether a tool like this could surface information that our standard hiring process does not. We were impressed. The simulation put the candidate in a high-pressure deal defense scenario and generated a detailed performance breakdown. We were able to see how the candidate improved across multiple attempts and gained visibility beyond reviewing a resume or interview alone.*  
 — Real Estate Executive



■ Session 1: 45   ■ Session 2: 53   ■ Session 3: 88

All three sessions occurred within approximately 80 minutes. Score progression: 45 → 53 → 88.

## Trend Findings

How the candidate changed across three unsupervised attempts at the same simulation.

### 01 The Briefing Dossier Was Always There — Using It Took Two Attempts

Every number the candidate needed was available from Session 1: rent per square foot, IRR figures, cap rate assumptions, population growth data. None of it appeared in the first session. By Session 2, it did. This is not a knowledge gap — it is a pressure gap. Under simulated scrutiny, the candidate initially defaulted to the language of the briefing rather than its substance. The simulation's resistance forced a reckoning with what 'knowing the deal' actually requires. The dossier became a tool only after the candidate experienced the cost of not using it.

### 02 The Waffling Problem Was Precisely Identified — Then Eliminated

The bot's rubric flagged 'You're right' in Session 2 as a critical failure point. The candidate had no coach to explain why. By Session 3, the phrase was gone. When challenged on the same tenant credit question, the candidate pivoted to re-leaseability and property quality without conceding the premise. This is the simulation doing exactly what it is designed to do: creating a consequence for a specific behavior, and allowing the candidate to correct it through repetition rather than instruction.

### 03 Conviction and Quantitative Fluency Developed Together

Sessions 1 and 3 are not differentiated by knowledge alone. The candidate knew the deal in Session 1. What Session 3 demonstrates is the integration of knowledge and composure — the ability to produce a specific number at the moment of maximum pressure, without hedging. That integration did not come from being told to be more confident. It came from experiencing, twice, what happens when confidence is absent or numbers are missing.

### 04 The Opening Is the Last Thing to Stabilize

The candidate's opening improved from Session 1 to Session 2, then regressed slightly in Session 3 — beginning with a deflective question before recovering. This suggests that while the core of the defense consolidated quickly, the opening remained least stable under pressure. Candidates often over-prepare for objections and under-prepare the first thirty seconds. This simulation surfaces that gap precisely, and points to a specific coaching opportunity that would not have been visible in a written submission.

### 05 The Simulation Functioned as a Self-Correcting Environment

No one reviewed the candidate's work between sessions. No rubric was explained in advance. She iterated based entirely on what the bot accepted and what it rejected — a form of immediate, consequential feedback that interviews and written case studies rarely provide. The 43-point score improvement across three unsupervised attempts reflects a simulation specific enough to distinguish between a strong and a weak defense, and resistant enough to make the difference matter. That combination — specificity and resistance — is what turns repetition into learning.