

Leveraging Recruitment Technology in the Age of the Retail Apocalypse

How the Right AI Solution Can Transform
Retailers' Hiring Lifecycle



The rumor mill's been abuzz with news of retail's imminent apocalypse. Yet, strong sales forecasts signal anything but an impending death. And in the sink-or-swim era, both survival and success will hinge on technological advancement — applied beyond the sales platform and into the hiring lifecycle.

Big box brick-and-mortar store closings have been dominating headlines since 2008, with stories of bankruptcies and layoffs increasingly littering the reporting landscape.

And while major American retailers have certainly suffered their fair share of challenges in the time of digital transformation, those responding to a changing environment by evolving their sales, supply chain, and delivery processes are not only surviving - they're thriving.

These gamechangers, whether they're savvy startups or early adopting brand icons, also understand that customer experience is now the number one element that affects a buyer's decision to purchase.³

This research revelation alongside the reality of a still healthy retail job market means one thing: **hiring the right people and keeping stores (both physical and online) staffed at optimal headcount is mission critical to the bottom line.**

However, thanks to a tight labor market that's created hiring problems across the economy, demand for talent is exceeding supply (especially during seasonal hiring upticks) – even while the average annual quit rate in the retail industry hit a decade high in 2018.⁴

Further, the nature of retail jobs is changing, with role requirements now including more hard-to-hire-for technical skills than ever before.

In short, it's not enough to leverage technology to drive sales; those organizations that want to outpace competitors need a hiring strategy as innovative as their consumers.

The good news is that AI recruiting solutions are available and ready to revolutionize end-to-end recruiting with software that quickly and easily creates a more efficient, more scalable, and more delightful hiring lifecycle.



RETAIL EMPLOYMENT
still makes up over
10% of the non-farm
ECONOMY²



RETAIL SALES
are earmarked
TO INCREASE BETWEEN
3.8% - 4.4%
in **2019**¹

Here's how. >>

Attract High Volumes of Applicants in Short Bursts of Time

Unfilled jobs are piling up in the retail industry.

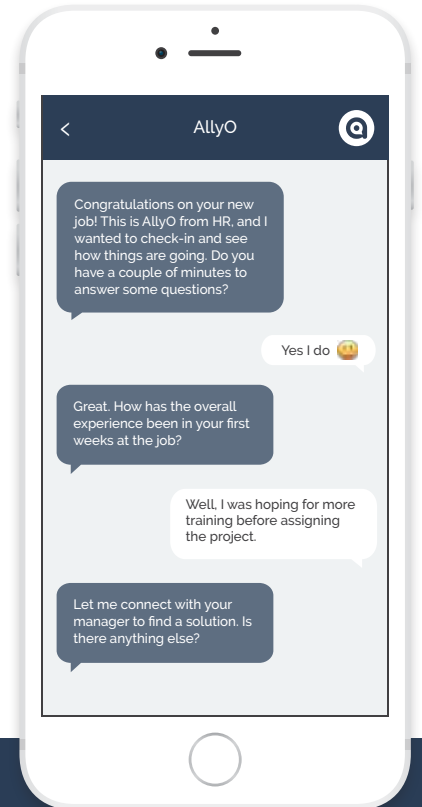
The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) reported more openings but fewer hires in January 2019 compared with January 2018, even after recording huge increases in openings from 2018 compared to 2017.

SALES REPRESENTATIVES
are in the top
HARDEST ROLES
to fill in the US⁵

Further, with the unemployment rate still hovering at a 50-year low, the talent shortage will continue to hamstring recruiting — as will a widening skills gap.

Needless to say, retailers are struggling to adequately man cash registers and keep stores staffed up and stocked up - even outside of the holiday hiring boon.

Smart companies know that too few salespeople can mean too few sales dollars, which is why they're turning to intelligent technology to find creative solutions to boosting applicant volume as quickly as possible.



3 Ways AI Technology Can Boost Applicant Volume

1 Convert Customer Base to Candidate Pool

AI technology like AllyO can transform the customers that already love your brand into candidates quickly and easily. Thanks to text-to-apply technology ideal for in-store promotion and online sitewide chatbots that urge eCommerce shoppers to apply now.

2 Mine Existing Database for Talent in Seconds

Proactively reach out to passive candidates in your database at scale thanks to natural language processing texting technology that can engage just like a human. It's simple and efficient to evaluate a person's interest in a role, answer questions about a job, and even send links to apply.

3 Increase Application Completion Rates with a Shorter Funnel

Bypass tedious resume submission and review entirely and let intelligent software like AllyO screen applicants in real-time, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. With the help of chatbot technology that leverages conversational psychology, candidates can answer a few simple questions and go from application to scheduled interview in minutes.

Staff Up at Scale In the Mist of Severe Holiday Hiring Challenges

CHECKLIST

for Seasonal Hiring AI Technology



Does the technology make it simple to **make high-value seasonal re-hires** by conducting en masse text-based outreach to your existing database?



Does the technology help **convert walk-in customers to candidates on the spot** with text-to-apply functionality?



Does the technology reach hourly workers where they want to be reached - and on the medium that **delivers the quickest response times** (a mobile device!)?



Does the technology **automate low-value, time-consuming tasks** (e.g. interview scheduling) to free up recruiters to focus on business critical work during this high-stress period?



Does the technology **eliminate poorly qualified candidates** with knockout questions and structured pre-screening, so you don't waste time where it's not useful?



Does the technology **make it easy to keep workers engaged** via automated new hire check-ins, flagging flight risks early on and giving you peace of mind that short-lived seasonal hires will stay put?



Example of Sprouts Farmers Market Text-To-Apply in store feature advertised prior to peak holiday season.

Tackle Holiday Hiring With AI Recruiting Tech

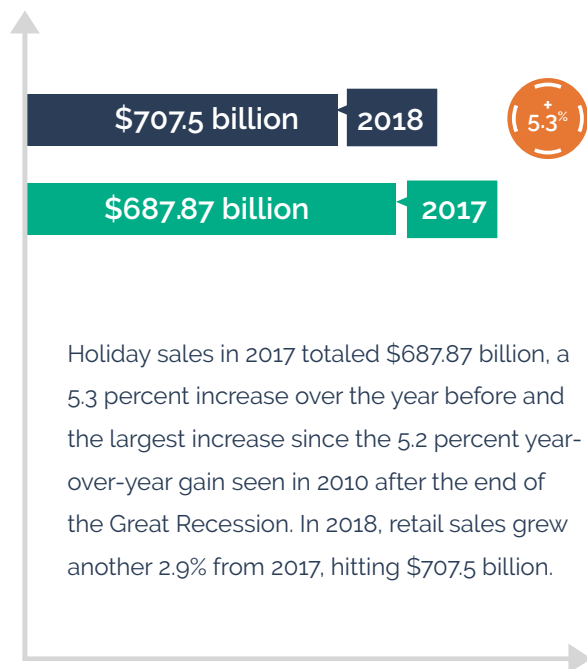
All retailers want for Christmas is a store properly staffed with fully trained, reliable workers, but this holiday wish is fast becoming as fantastical as Santa Claus in the face of more severe seasonal recruiting challenges.

Huge upticks in holiday sales are creating an increasingly impossible task for those that aren't adequately prepared to handle the volume and pace of this seasonal hiring burst amidst a near full employment economy.

Further, the acute talent shortage means that the workers who are available tend to be younger and less experienced. These bright-eyed, bushy-tailed hires often also don't benefit from structured training or appropriate onboarding given the pressure to get salespeople in place and assisting holiday shoppers.

This perfect storm of elements puts retailers at risk of both endangering their customer experience and diluting their brand, both of which directly affect the bottom line.

On the flipside, those with the right end-to-end AI recruiting technology in place can rest knowing they'll not only be able to conduct business as usual, but that they'll also be able to better engage hires and create more seamless onboarding experiences, laying the groundwork for better customer experiences and happier future full-time employees (if relevant).



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Part of having such a strong economy is that the pool of seasonal workers gets a lot smaller, and those roles get more difficult to fill.

-Ana Smith, NRF Senior Director of Media Relations

Curb Skyrocketing Turnover Rates and Retain Quality Hires

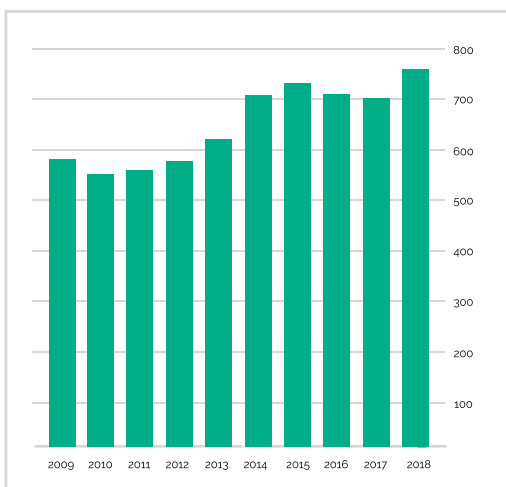
The retail industry is no stranger to turnover. But amidst a candidate-driven job market marked by long overdue wage growth, workers are more readily jumping ship for better opportunities, more money, and flexible hours.

Quit rates in the sector hit an all-time annual average high in 2018, and **part-time hourly workers have over an 80% turnover rate, up from 76% in 2017.**⁶

These dramatic spikes come with a hefty price tag, with the [Center for American Progress](#) suggesting that it costs **\$3,328 to find, hire, and train a replacement for a \$10/hour retail employee.**

The good news is that AI technology, like AllyO, can seamlessly bolster retention efforts, saving companies not only hundreds of thousands of dollars in direct costs, but also salvaging morale and productivity (two areas indirectly affected by high quit rates) along the way.

Average Annual Quits for the Retail Industry (in thousands)



How AllyO Curbs Retention in 3 Simple Steps

STEP
1

Engages employees from day one

Engaged employees are more likely to stay longer in their jobs, and with AllyO, it's easy to create a strong relationships with candidates from the get-go. The solution's AI technology automates candidate communication from the first interaction, eliminating black holes and nurturing connections with human-like conversational processing.

STEP
2

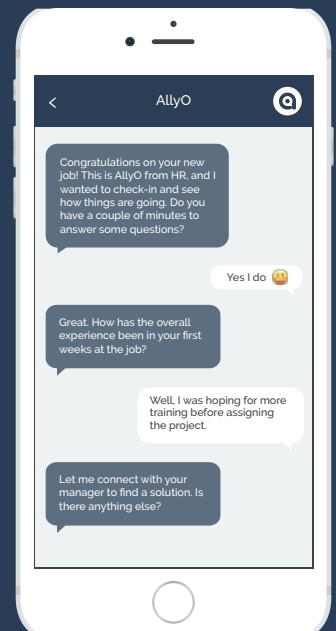
Improves onboarding experience

Lack of guidance in a new hire's first days on the job can directly impact their decision to quit in the weeks and months that follow. AllyO creates a more structured and seamless onboarding process by automatically answering candidate questions during this critical period and delivering essential documents and information.

STEP
3

Create trustworthy feedback loop

Thanks to AllyO's automated new hire check-ins at 30-day and 60-day points, HR leaders and general managers can collect and synthesize actionable insights into employee challenges as well as flag potential flight risks.

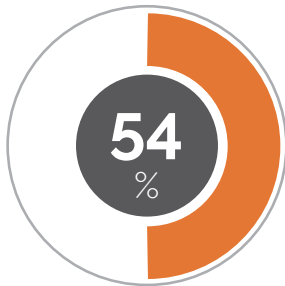


Improve Customer Experience by Bettering Candidate Experience

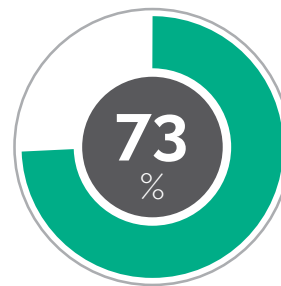
More than ever, consumers want meaningful shopping experiences, both in-person and online.⁸

Superior customer service and engagement on a personal level have become business critical, and in an industry where the line between consumers and candidates is blurred, delivering exceptional customer service begins with a flawless candidate experience.

Retailers that have successfully revolutionized their ability to interact and engage with potential employees have turned to AI technology to automate their candidate communication, eliminate the notorious black hole, and nurture relationships on candidates' medium of choice (their mobile device).



54% of candidates say that candidate experience directly influences their decision to buy a company's products or services



73% of jobseekers say they want to receive targeted jobs via text messaging⁹

7 Candidate Experience Benefits of AI Technology



Around the clock availability - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Targeted texts to mobile devices - reach candidates where they want to be reached



100% candidate response rates - bid farewell to the black hole



Real-time response to candidate questions



Seamless interview scheduling



Simplified application process



Post-hire guidance and feedback collection



Are you ready to revolutionize your recruitment approach and get the right hires in the right roles at the right cost?

To learn how AllyO can help your business streamline its hiring processes with an end-to-end AI recruiter, [contact us](#) today.

LET'S CHAT

1 "NRF says 'state of the economy is sound' and forecasts retail sales will grow between 3.8 and 4.4 percent." February 5, 2019. National Retail Federation

2 "Retail sales: Trends in revenue and employment." January 23, 2018. Deloitte Insights. <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/economy/behind-the-numbers/changes-in-retail-sales-economic-impact.html#endnote-sup-4>

3 "Research Shows Customer Experience Top Reason Consumers Choose a Brand." June 20, 2018. PR Newswire. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/research-shows-customer-experience-top-reason-consumers-choose-a-brand-300669115.html>

4 "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey." March 18, 2019. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/JTU4400000T-SL?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true

5 "On Trend Hiring: Research Reveals How Retailers Can Attract In-Demand Talent This Holiday Season." October 28, 2019. PR Newswire <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/on-trend-hiring-research-reveals-how-retailers-can-attract-in-demand-talent-this-holiday-season-300739724.html>

6 "Retail Employee Turnover Up as Black Friday and Holiday Shopping Season Nears, According to Korn Ferry Survey of Top U.S. Retailers." November 15, 2018. BusinessWire <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181115005847/en>

7 "Developing and Sustaining Employee Engagement." Accessed March 20, 2018. Society for Human Resource Management. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/sustainingemployeeengagement.aspx>

8 "2017 Retail Trends Report." Accessed March 11, 2018. In Moment. http://info.inmoment.com/rs/463-JAW-587/images/InMoment_Report_RetailTrends_Nov2017.pdf

9 "A New Message for Recruiting." September 4, 2018. Recruiting Trends <http://recruitingtrends.com/a-new-message-for-recruiting/>

The Most Recognized End-to-End AI Recruiter



AllyO is an AI technology company with a simple mission — to make recruiting delightful and efficient for everyone. AllyO addresses the traditional inefficiencies of lost applicants and conversions due to poor candidate experience, high cost of recruiting due to overburdening of administrative tasks on hiring teams, and lack of visibility and control for HR leadership. It utilizes deep workflow conversational AI to fully automate the end-to-end recruiting workflow by intelligently engaging via texting over mobile and web. It is used by Fortune 500 companies and leading retailers including St. John Knits, CORT, and Avis Budget Group that have experienced 2-6X increase in applicant capture and conversion rate, 91% application completion rate, and over 50% reduction in cost and time to hire.

Today, our AI recruiting platform is integrated across your recruiting and productivity tech stacks including applicant tracking systems (Taleo Enterprise, ICIMS, Workday Recruiting, Lever, Greenhouse and any platform supporting flat files and or APIs) and calendaring tools (G-Suite, Office 365, and Microsoft Exchange). Please e-mail hello@allyo.com for an updated list of integrations.

AllyO is backed by leading investors such as Google, Randstad Innovation Fund, Sapphire Ventures, Bain Capital Ventures, Cervin Ventures, and Scale Venture Partners.



Capture & Apply



Screen & Assess



Schedule & Hire



New Hire Check-In



Talent Pool Engagement



Employee Referrals



Live Chat



Analytics

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