

How Conversational AI is Helping Wendy's Franchisees Turn Hiring Struggles into Staffing Perfection

Speed is everything in high-volume recruiting — particularly in the fast-food industry, where restaurants are almost always hiring and competition is fierce. The first employer to respond with an interview and offer almost always snags the best people.

This has always been true, but it's been especially acute in the middle of a global pandemic.

"When the world is upside down, the last thing you can afford to worry about is whether your restaurant can be staffed," says Sean Servey, who manages restaurant operations for Pertoria Inc.'s six Wendy's locations in Northwest Ohio. "There were so many things we needed to figure out when COVID-19 hit. We couldn't afford to have staffing and recruiting process issues — like candidates just flat out not showing up for interviews — be one of them."

Thankfully, Pertoria and many other Wendy's franchisees had a secret weapon: An AI Assistant named Lou.

What makes Lou special? For Colleen Alleman, a General Manager for HAZA Foods, which operates 250 Wendy's locations across Texas, Louisiana, and Minnesota, it's simple: Lou makes applying to a job at Wendy's as simple as having a quick text message conversation. And he reduces the hiring burden on restaurant managers by automatically screening and scheduling the very best candidates for interviews.

"The burden our AI assistant has eliminated from our manager's operational — and even personal — time has been amazing," says Alleman.

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Sean Servey
Operations Manager, Wendy's Pertoria Franchise

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Colleen Alleman
General Manager, HAZA Foods

For James Harris, a Wendy's franchise owner who operates 26 restaurants via Group W AKSAN, it all comes back to the issue of experience and speed: "Lou allows us to get to the candidate first, giving us the top choice of the very best people available. We're not just keeping our restaurants fully staffed, we're staffing them with incredible people."



GROUP W AKSAN

Using a Virtual Assistant to Quickly Respond to the Best Talent First

About the Franchisee

Franchise: Group W AKSAN

Locations: 26

Region: Washington and Oregon

“Most people aren’t going to wait for days to hear back from a restaurant. They’re going to apply to multiple locations and start with whoever contacts them first.”

James Harris
Field Support Manager, Group W AKSAN

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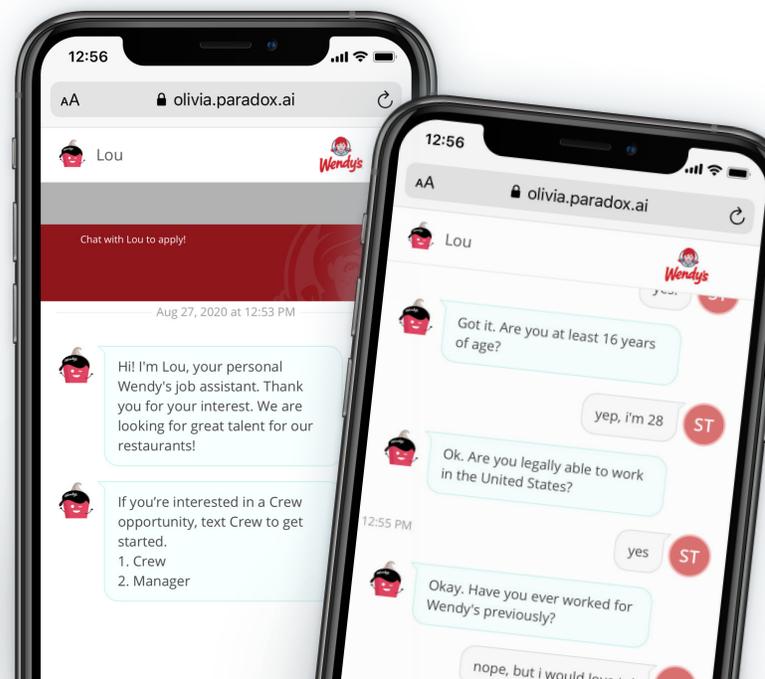
James Harris
Field Support Manager, Group W AKSAN

With over five years of hiring experience, James Harris, a Field Support Manager at Group W, understands the frustrations of restaurant hiring. “Most people aren’t going to wait for days to hear back from a restaurant,” Harris explains. “They’re going to apply to multiple locations and start with whoever contacts them first.” For Harris and his team, speed is always the main ingredient to hire the best people before they go somewhere else.

Enter Lou.

Lou gives Group W’s restaurant managers the power to hire over text — and do it immediately after someone applies. He automatically schedules qualified candidates for interviews — eliminating the candidates’ wait and often scheduling an interview the very next day.

“Before Lou, we were understaffed at many locations,” Harris says. “Lou allows us to get to the candidate first, giving us the top choice of the very best people available. We’re not just improving staffing for all our locations, we’re staffing them with incredible people.”



Eliminating Phone Tag to Completely Transform Candidate Communication

About the Franchisee

Franchise: HAZA Foods

Locations: 250

Region: Texas, Louisiana, Minnesota

“We still have turnover, but now we have the ability to fill those open spots as soon as they open.”

Colleen Alleman
General Manager, HAZA Foods

Colleen Alleman is in-charge of staffing 45 restaurants across HAZA Food’s New Orleans division. Unsurprisingly, keeping 45 restaurants staffed is no easy undertaking.

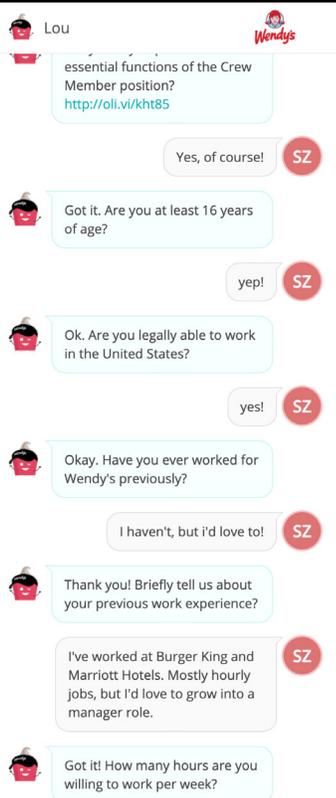
“The hours and hours I used to spend going through applicants is unbelievable,” Alleman says.

And then there was the scheduling phone tag: “Not shocking, but 90% of people would never answer their phones. Then we’d have to email or just keep calling them. It was a total pain and slowed the whole process down.”

That’s no longer the case, thanks to HAZA Foods’ AI Assistant.

Introducing Lou to Haza Foods’ hiring process has drastically reduced the time Alleman and her managers spend coordinating with candidates. “The burden Lou has eliminated from our manager’s operational — and even personal — time has been amazing,” Alleman says. Like most entry-level positions, HAZA Foods struggles with high turnover.

Lou is helping alleviate that issue, too. “We still have turnover,” Alleman says. “But now we have the ability to fill those open spots as soon as they open.”



PERTORIA

Decreasing Ghosting by Serving Candidates a White-Glove Experience

About the Franchisee

Franchise: Pertoria
Locations: 6
Region: Northwest Ohio

90%

**of Scheduled Candidates
Arrive for their Interview**

**"Everything that the Paradox team
promised has actually happened.
It's been an incredible transformation."**

Sean Servey
Director of New Initiatives, Pertoria, Inc.



Ready to meet Lou?

Visit www.paradox.ai/wendys



Competition for talent in Northwest Ohio is fierce — even during a period of record unemployment.

"You'd think hiring would be easier with record unemployment, but we're still seeing managers schedule candidates for interviews only to have them cancel because they accepted another job," says Sean Servey, Director of New Initiatives for Pertoria, Inc.'s six Wendy's locations in Northwest Ohio. "Hourly hiring is still ultra time-intensive. If you're not fast to respond, you won't get the best people."

And then there's the burden on Pertoria's store managers, who used to have to guide candidates throughout the process — playing phone tag to schedule interviews, reminding candidates about their interviews, answering questions throughout the process, and more.

Today, that burden's been significantly reduced thanks to Lou, Pertoria's AI Assistant.

Lou can now automatically and immediately screen and schedule qualified applicants, remind candidates of upcoming interviews, and answer questions in real-time. Since implementing Lou, Pertoria's locations are seeing far fewer interview no-shows or cancellations. Servey says nearly 90% of scheduled candidates actually show up.

"Delivering that kind of white-glove experience has been a game-changer for our team," Servey says. "Everything that the Paradox team promised has actually happened. It's been an incredible transformation."