RIC CENTRE IMPACT REPORT | Knockri

Artificial intelligence (AI) HR assessment solution overcomes bias and streamlines talent acquisition

knockri

IMPACT

Applying industrial-organizational (I/O) psychology and AI to vet candidates improves not only fairness but speeds the efficiency in workforce growth. The data science derived from this talent mobility solution; video-based with built in skill assessment benefits both candidates through reducing bias and employers by identifying targeted skills deemed most valuable to the open role.

"We were motivated to remove systemic bias from the hiring process," states Jahanzaib Ansari, co-founder and CEO of Knockri. In 2016, Jahanzaib was seeking employment with no luck. Maaz Rana, Knockri's co-founder and now COO suggested that he should re-apply with an anglicized name on his job applications. Within 4-6 weeks, Jahanzaib started to receive offers from the very same hiring managers that had previously rejected his application.

Identifying this bias and the gaps within the traditional hiring process, Jahanzaib and Maaz decided to partner with childhood friend and machine learning scientist, Faisal Ahmed - the third co-founder and CTO. After building an MVP, the founders began their study with a renowned Industrial-Organizational Psychologist to create a mobile based video solution.

Armed with a great concept, the three co-founders were 'broke' and working out of a Starbucks. Searching for funding, they reached out to RIC Centre (RICC). "Paul Barter, RICC Expert in Residence (EIR) helped us tremendously in understanding the market landscape and how to position ourselves appropriately for funding" says Jahanzaib.

HOW WE DID IT

In 2016, Knockri participated in RICC Champion Pitch Series. Jahanzaib stated "Geoff Simonett, another great RICC EIR, with a background in VC firms himself, really understood the VC mindset and worked with us to prioritize our pitch and proposals to raise institutional money. Geoff and the other RICC EIRs helped us understand the mind of a VC with tangible and direct feedback on our pitches. Keeping us focused and helping us clearly define our brand vision. This really accelerated our ability to secure $30K in first-round funding from the Government of Ontario."

Through research, Jahanzaib and his team identified that initial HR assessment screenings and the shortlisting process carried a large unconscious bias at the front end of the hiring process. They knew AI could overcome this by analyzing the verbal context

of the responses. By converting speech from video applications to text, and subsequently mapping candidate responses and skill knowledge against employers desired skillset they could accurately identify suitable candidates. Knockri's skills assessment technology helps to identify and map qualities such as empathy, collaborative skills and the presence of a growth mindset. Key and distinct performance skills that an employer may regard as valuable for their job role.

The process includes hiring managers logging onto Knockri and choosing a scientifically tested job persona. The required skills are then auto-populated including the questions to measure against. Video questions are created and sent to all of the potential candidates who are then assessed though AI. The top-ranking candidates are then scheduled for a virtual job interview. See how it works.

For ease and integration, Knockri's screening platform and API is compatible with most existing applicant tracking systems and talent acquisition solutions.

LOOKING AHEAD

Today, Jahanzaib says he remains connected to RICC's EIRs for sanity. Knockri, now employs 21 people, with early adoption of their tool growing swiftly in Silicon Valley. Recent milestones include raising $3M in financing and key partnerships with IBM, KPMG and Education First to name a few. https://www.knockri.com/2020/07/28/knockri-raises-3-million-to-reduce-hiring-bias-improve-diversity-and-help-hire-exceptional-talent/

Jahanzaib comments "COVID-19 has accelerated digital communication and lessened the face-to-face interaction. That, combined with the 'Black Lives Matter' movement has kept our mission, top of mind for a lot of organizations. A catalyst for social change while generating competitive advantages and transforming talent acquisition"

Currently, Knockri is working on a channel partnership with SAP's accelerator out of San Francisco. "We are excited about our growth and do believe we have the ability to scale quickly with no limitation. With technology and language translation available it could be adopted globally very quickly" states Jahanzaib. His hope is, very shortly, Knockri gets embedded everywhere in all the major job boards, such as LinkedIn, as the ideal API solution to the talent acquisition process as economies strengthen.