

How Hippo Insurance saw a 2x improvement in onsite-to-offer ratio with technical interviews from Karat

A case study with Hippo Insurance

Challenge

When Ran Harpaz joined Hippo Insurance as their CTO in 2019, he immediately accepted the challenge to double the size of their software engineering team. "In Silicon Valley, hiring top talent at the rate we needed is almost impossible for a startup. I needed as much support as I could get. We didn't have a systematic way to interview and hire top-notch developers."

Having previously led engineering teams in hyper-growth environments, Harpaz was looking for an approach that would give him and the organization the capacity needed to conduct technical interviews for high-caliber talent across seven different roles, including DevOps, Big Data, and Senior Full Stack Engineers.

Harpaz had been introduced to Karat in a previous role through an investor. When looking at Hippo and the scale of their hiring needs, Karat was top of mind as a solution.

"Karat's Intuit story got stuck in my head. The idea of Google-like engineers consistently interviewing thousands of candidates was a breakthrough. The combination of very experienced interviewers with a very sophisticated platform that actually calibrates constantly and takes away all the bias and the nonsense that comes in with humans was key. It was evident that there was one path going forward. It took me seven seconds to recognize the importance of being able to interview hundreds of people consistently and professionally, so I said, 'let's skip the market research, let's go with Karat.'"

Solution

"The professionalism was visible from the very early stages. I invited people to interview through Karat as part of getting them excited, and they came back saying, 'this is awesome,'" said Harpaz.

Prior to conducting interviews on behalf of Hippo, Karat worked with Harpaz and his engineering team to understand the competencies and skill levels required for each of the seven roles, as well as the specific technical hiring bar that Hippo set for each of the roles. This process, called Alignment Engineering, helps ensure the best possible onsite-to-offer ratios by calibrating Karat's recommendations to Hippo's specific criteria. Doing this ensured that the Hippo team brought the right candidates onsite so that both the interviewing capacity and expertise they needed from Karat had benefit through the full hiring process and led to faster, high-quality hires.

Case study in brief

▲ CHALLENGE

Hippo needed to double the size of their engineering team in order to meet aggressive product and growth goals but lacked the interviewing capacity and expertise to do so.

👁 SOLUTION

Karat conducts first-round technical interviews on behalf of Hippo and provides analytics, insights, and training to increase hiring yield across seven unique roles.

▮ RESULTS

Professional, consistent, and highly predictive hiring process.

2x improvement in onsite-to-offer ratio.

93% of candidates rated the interview experience as positive.

Hippo's engagement with Karat goes beyond just technical interviewing. Karat provides detailed hiring funnel analytics, insights about the market that drive strategic talent acquisition decisions, and interviewer training to continue the consistency and predictiveness throughout the entire hiring process. Harpaz observed, "Anytime I can pull in my Karat counterparts — they help us, they give us new solutions and talk about new ideas."

"My Karat browser tab is always open. Watching the interview videos gives me insight into culture alignment before I meet the candidate. I'm able to attend debriefs with my team with an informed opinion about the candidate. Looking at those videos is a constant feed into what works. This may not be right for every engineering leader, but it works for me."

Results

Karat conducted almost 700 technical interviews on behalf of Hippo during 2020, helping their engineering team reclaim over 2,000 software engineering hours. But Harpaz is quick to point out that Karat isn't just about time savings: "It's enablement; I couldn't do the job without it. I rely heavily on Karat because it is the one thing in our hiring process that is consistent and systematic. The inconsistent output I'd get if Karat did not conduct the interviews would throw me off completely." He articulated three critical reasons that his team has been so successful with their technical hiring as the result of working with Karat — the time savings, the predictiveness of employee performance, and the candidate experience.

Karat has saved Hippo significant time in three key aspects:

- First, because Karat can conduct technical interviews 24/7, there's no dependency on the availability of Hippo's engineers. Technical interviewing is always happening at the days and times that are best for the candidate, so the hiring process keeps moving forward without burdening the engineering or recruiting teams and without rescheduling overhead.
- Second, because Karat has built a highly-calibrated, professional, and consistent technical interview, Hippo saves time by not having to re-train their own team to conduct better technical interviews, which would have been an ongoing investment.
- Finally, Karat's recommendation system — which was calibrated to Hippo's specific technical hiring bar — provides the confidence to filter out over half of the candidates before investing the time to bring them onsite. As Harpaz said, "Every 'false positive' when we screened on our own, due to bias or lack of accurate assessment, resulted in about 5 extra hours for a full panel to interview what we then discovered was the wrong candidate."

In addition to the time savings, Hippo has found Karat's data to be a very strong predictor of employee performance. Hippo's experience has been that candidates recommended by Karat to "Fast Track" for an onsite interview who then meet their onsite panel's criteria typically become high performers at Hippo. He then said that "everyone else we hired following a Karat interview has been solid." Hippo grew their engineering team by 3x since they started working with Karat at the start of 2020, and all candidates interviewed by Karat are still part of the team. Hippo also places a high priority on an enjoyable candidate experience, and on this front, Karat has helped them continue to deliver just that. When surveying Hippo candidates interviewed by Karat, 93% rated their interview experience with 4 or 5 stars on a 5-point scale.

Because Karat is able to interview 24/7, candidates have more flexibility to pick a day and time that's best for them. The average time from a candidate receiving the interview invitation to Karat's recommendation being provided to clients is 5.8 calendar days. Harpaz has also heard firsthand from candidates he speaks with that when they come onsite, their Karat experience "has been professional, educational, and very productive."

Hippo believes that bringing Karat into the hiring process has made it less biased, more professional, and all-around better for the candidates. They have seen that a live interview like Karat's gives a stronger signal. "Because I can review the candidates' technical interviews with Karat anytime, I'm seeing the candidate asking and answering questions, which gives me a ton of richness that I wouldn't get from a code test. I won't give that up and can't imagine another way of hiring."

Karat and Hippo partnership by the numbers



2x onsite-to-offer ratio improvement



5.8 days average time in the Karat process



40% of candidates interview on nights and weekends



93% of candidates surveyed rate the experience as positive

ABOUT HIPPO INSURANCE

Hippo is on a mission to transform home insurance for the modern household. Among its many innovations, Hippo allows homeowners to get a quote, purchase home insurance online in 60 seconds or less, save up to 25 percent compared with traditional insurers, and obtain smarter coverage for the modern home. This includes protection for possessions like appliances, consumer electronics, and home offices.

ABOUT KARAT

Karat conducts live, highly predictive technical interviews and powers world-class hiring processes for leading organizations like Indeed, Intuit, and Pinterest.

Karat's network of experienced Interview Engineers have conducted tens of thousands of technical interviews with software engineering job candidates. Clients increase capacity to interview with structure and consistency all while providing exceptional candidate experiences.

Trusted by the best

