



# Using AI to expand staff and drive employee engagement

A major national franchise, Sport Clips Haircuts, adopts intelligent automation to help its franchisees thrive

This hair care franchise is aiming to grow its workforce by 30% and improve employee productivity and engagement using [responsible AI](#) and intelligent automation.

“As a franchisor, we have a big responsibility. People who become franchisees are trusting us with, in many cases, their life savings,” explains Gordon Logan, Chairman and Founder of Sport Clips. “The question we always receive from new franchisees is, ‘Where do I find the people I need to staff my store and deliver that championship haircut experience?’ We need to give them peace of mind that when they come on board, they’ll be able to find



quality people to staff their stores and they’ll have the tools they need to grow their business.”

Sport Clips, a national hair care franchise with 13,000 stylists working across 1,900 locations in the US and Canada, is laser-focused on helping its franchisees run their stores as

effectively as possible. “Our franchisees look to us to help them drive store-level ROI and make it easier to run their business. We are always on the lookout for innovative solutions that are easy to use and true game-changers: not just incremental improvements,” says Edward Logan, CEO and President of Sport Clips.

Currently, a top goal for Sport Clips is to increase staffing levels across its franchise locations by 30% and implement new tools and processes to help franchisees improve employee productivity and engagement.

To achieve these objectives, Sport Clips has partnered with ThisWay® Global and begun implementing the [IBM watsonx® Orchestrate](#) solution. ThisWay Global provides a candidate sourcing and matching platform that sources unique talent from over 8,500 diversity-based organizations. Powered by the latest AI technology, IBM watsonx Orchestrate uses natural language processing to dynamically sequence skills from an expanding catalog of pre-built skills to execute common and complex tasks—in context, in the right order and in real time.

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Reduced a 3-hour  
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3 min

when testing a candidate outreach workflow



# Optimizing talent acquisition processes

With IBM watsonx Orchestrate, teams can delegate mundane tasks and instead focus their energy on their more strategic (and enjoyable) work. For example, when it comes to talent acquisition, IBM watsonx Orchestrate uses intelligent automation to handle interview scheduling. It helps ensure that the recruitment process runs smoothly both for the hiring company as well as the job candidate. It frees up teams to focus on building relationships with candidates and hiring the best fit for the role and company. ThisWay Global further supports teams' talent acquisition efforts by giving them instant access to 169 million diverse candidates and providing an unbiased AI-powered



matching algorithm that makes it easier for hiring teams to ethically source and identify qualified candidates for their open roles.

It took less than an hour to onboard Sport Clips' franchisees to IBM watsonx

Orchestrate and ThisWay Global and start gaining productivity. With IBM watsonx Orchestrate and the ThisWay Global platform, franchisees will have the ability to integrate different systems and tools into a single user interface that they can use to manage their end-

to-end recruiting process. Through chat-style interactions, users will be able to initiate automations (known as skills) for tasks such as creating new job requisitions, socializing job listings on job boards and identifying qualified candidates using ThisWay Global. This new approach to talent acquisition is intended to free up franchisees to focus on building relationships with prospective stylists and accelerate their overall recruitment process. It is also intended to free them up to focus on running their stores.

“Many people are talking about automating labor and replacing labor. We think about it the opposite way,” explains Edward Logan. “We believe in AI and automation for the purposes of enabling labor and expanding headcount: for allowing team members to do what they do best and what they enjoy.”

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# Looking ahead

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Sport Clips will be using responsible AI and intelligent automation not to reduce staffing but to grow it by 30%. “Our goal is to go from 13,000 stylists to 17,000 stylists in the next 12 to 18 months, and we can’t do it with traditional talent acquisition methods,” says Edward Logan.

The team is in the very beginning in its adoption journey, but it is seeing some encouraging results so far. ThisWay Global helps Sport Clips streamline its process of identifying qualified candidates, while IBM watsonx Orchestrate helps enable the team to reach out to those candidates. “In our early testing of candidate communication workflows, we observed a task that used to take three hours could instead be done in just a few minutes,” explains Logan.

The team is also aiming to expand their adoption of responsible AI and intelligent automation to reduce the repetitive tasks stylists undertake. The Sport Clips team recently learned that stylists switch tasks 30 times a day, as they handle scheduling, payment processing and the various other tasks related to running a hair care business. As it advances its adoption of IBM watsonx Orchestrate, Sport Clips plans to reduce those manual tasks and free up stylists to focus on hair care as much as possible.

“We need to do everything possible to maximize our franchisees’ probability of success and help them achieve their dreams. AI and automation are going to be an important part of that,” explains Gordon Logan.



### About Sport Clips Haircuts

[Sport Clips](#) (link resides outside of ibm.com) was founded in 1993 and is headquartered in Georgetown, Texas. The sports-themed haircutting franchise ranks #30 in the Entrepreneur “Franchise 500” for 2023 and is listed in Franchise Direct’s 2021 “Top 100 Global Franchises.” There are almost 1,900 Sport Clips stores open in the US and Canada.

### Solution component

- IBM watsonx® Orchestrate

### About ThisWay Global

Founded by Angela Hood in University of Cambridge’s ideaSpace, [ThisWay Global](#) (link resides outside of ibm.com) is a company focused on leveraging artificial intelligence and business automation to unlock human potential. ThisWay is a Google accelerated company, the go-to-market technology partner for IBM watsonx Orchestrate and one of the fastest growing SaaS automation companies in the world. It currently serves over 5,000 mid-market and enterprise customers who are investing in talent transformation, compliance with EEOC and OFCCP, fair recruitment, DEI and ESG. ThisWay Global is headquartered in the booming tech hub of Austin, Texas, with offices in Silicon Valley and Boston.