

# Scotiabank Transforms Campus Recruiting

Replacing Resumes with  
Behavioral Assessments

A photograph of three young adults, two men and one woman, standing outdoors on a paved area with trees in the background. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The woman on the left is holding a purple folder. The man in the center is wearing glasses and a denim shirt, holding an open orange notebook. The man on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt and holding a white notebook. The overall scene is bright and positive, suggesting a collaborative and friendly environment.

the  
**joshbersin**  
company

# A Leading Canadian Multinational Bank

Scotiabank is a Canadian multinational banking and financial services company headquartered in Toronto, Ontario. With a team of approximately 100,000 employees and assets of approximately \$1.2 trillion (as of January 2020), Scotiabank is the third-largest Canadian bank by deposits and market capitalization.

## Hiring for the Whole Human

Scotiabank strives to strengthen and sustain its culture and value proposition as a humanistic brand. The company is conscious of the fact that every interaction it has with the market or with candidates—and particularly how it approaches talent acquisition—impacts its employer brand. In an attempt to optimize the hiring process to be fair, objective, and data-driven, the company wanted to establish an approach that would allow them to know the whole human—hiring individuals for their potential and the behavioral skills they bring, rather than just for their education and previous work experience.

“  
”

*We needed an approach that addressed questions that are critical to our vision. How do we always have a humanistic approach, knowing that our volumes are high and it's not possible to talk to every applicant? How do we identify the best candidates to focus on in a scalable and trustable manner? Amid all of this, how do we ensure a laser focus on DEI and fair and objective decision-making?*

*James Spearling  
VP, Global Talent Acquisition, Scotiabank*

### Summary

#### Challenge

- Building an employer brand aligned with their humanistic vision.
- Establishing a hiring approach that would allow them to hire individuals for their behavioral skills and potential, not just for their education and previous work experience.
- Launching hiring mechanisms that are fair, objective, scalable, and inclusive.

#### Solution

- Eliminated resume requirements in the campus hiring process.
- Deployed a talent assessment that supports the company with the new resumeless approach by providing credible data on employees' behavioral skills.
- Empowered candidates with an understanding of the types of job profiles they are more likely to succeed in and helped recruiters identify the right fits for various job opportunities.

#### Results

- Going resumeless was well received by students and significantly improved the candidate experience.
- More people of color are now entering the workforce through campus hirings, with visible minorities representing close to 60% of campus hiring intake.
- The retention rate of campus hires has almost doubled from 26% prelaunch, to 46% postlaunch of the new approach.

## What's in a Resume, Anyway?

Scotiabank wanted to ensure that the screening process did not filter out deserving candidates from entering the pipeline due to biases. The team also wanted to establish a mechanism to objectively determine job fit as well as potential for early talent with little or no previous work experience.

In August 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, Scotiabank pulled the plug on resume requirements in the campus hiring process. Scotiabank also piloted new assessments for roles in Scotiabank Digital Factory, the internal function that works to transform digital banking to better serve customers via the development of customer-facing digital products.

“ ”

*The first entry point of bias is in the screening process. There's a ton of potential opportunities for biases that are linked to resumes—such as an individual's name, ethnic origins, schools, work experience, or where they live. And if we remove all of that, what's really left in a resume for early career talent?*

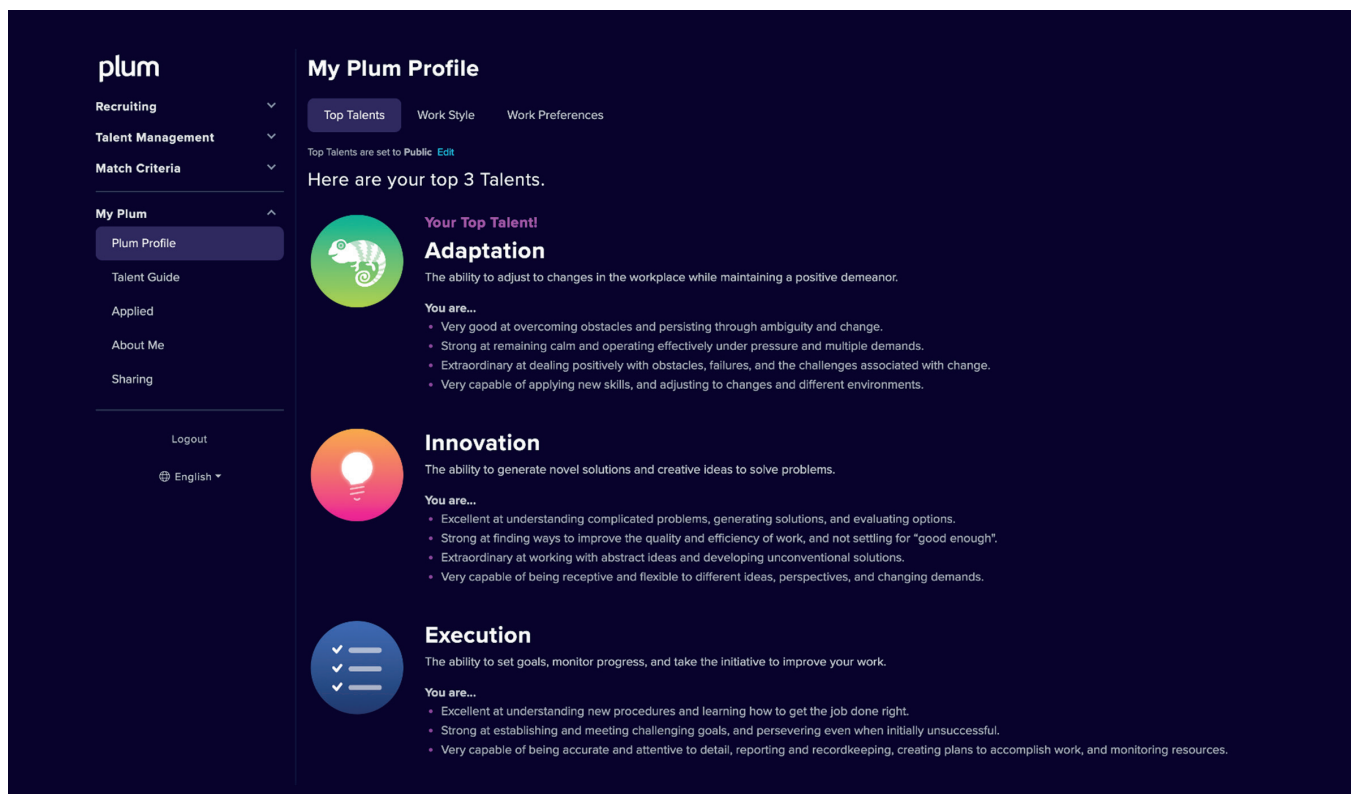
**Jena Cammisoli**  
 Director and Global Head  
 Campus Recruitment & Talent  
 Scotiabank

## Behavioral Assessments: Supporting Objective Decision-Making

Scotiabank partnered with Plum—a talent assessment platform that measures personality, social intelligence, and problem-solving ability—to help with the decision-making process. This solution supports the company with the new resumeless approach by providing credible data on employees' behavioral skills.

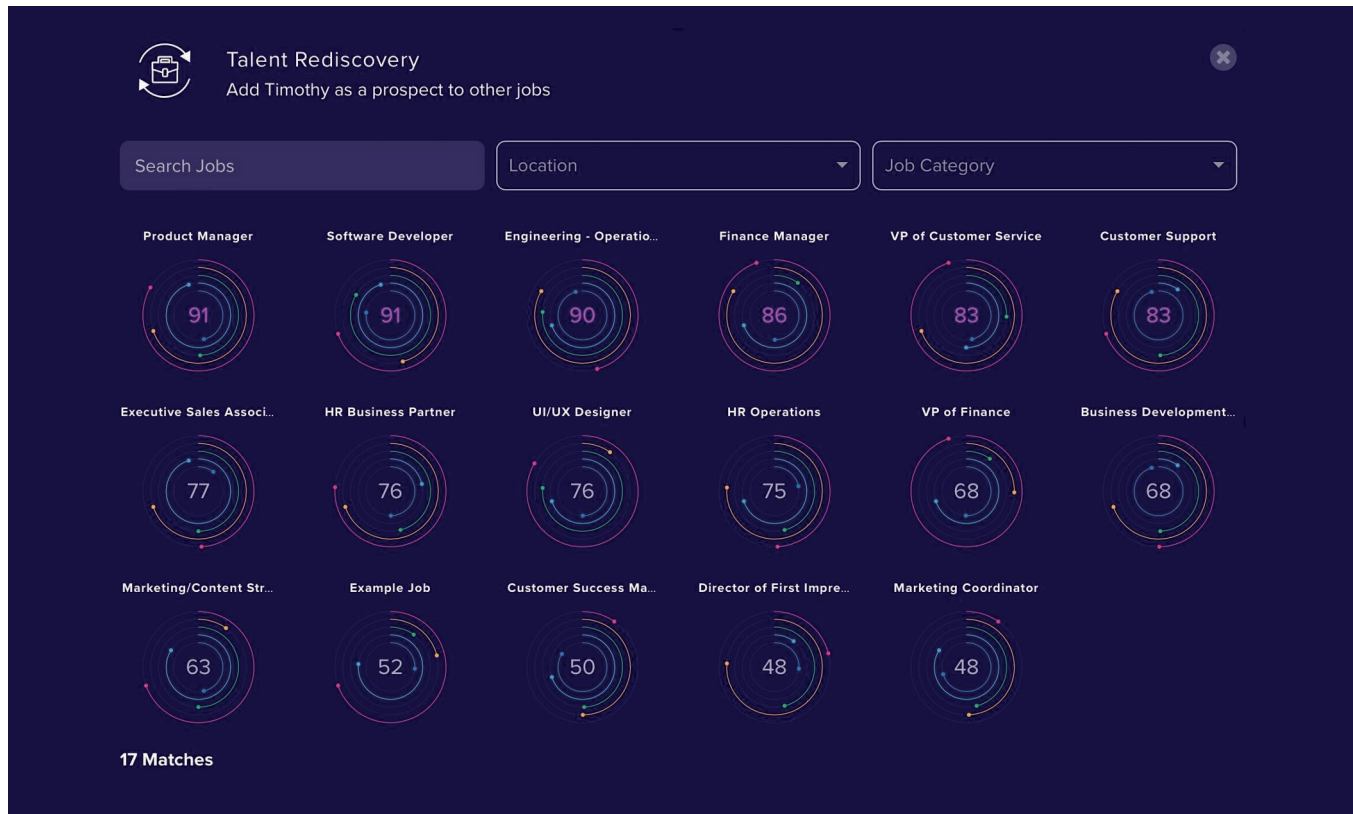
Candidates can take the assessment and instantly receive a personalized talent profile of their top behavioral skills, work style, and work preferences (see Figure 1). The hiring team completes a job analysis in the platform to assess the behavioral requirements for each role. At the same time, recruiters can see a “match score”—a score indicating a candidate's potential fit with different roles in the organization (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1: Personalized Talent Profile**



Source: Scotiabank

**Figure 2: Match Score (Candidates' Potential to Fit Multiple Roles)**



Source: Scotiabank

The platform empowers candidates with a better understanding of the types of job profiles they are more likely to succeed in and equips recruiters with the information they need to identify the right fit for various job opportunities. The assessment is also an integral enabler of the company's overarching "relationship-based model" for campus hiring.

## The Relationship-Based Model for Campus Hiring

In Canada, Scotiabank hires approximately 1,000 students as interns or as part of their graduate development program, and about 250 students per year into their rotational programs designed specifically for new graduates. To drive an optimal candidate experience for these campus hires, Scotiabank runs a relationship-based model. Through this model, the company can forge deep and long-lasting relationships with their candidates, educate them on the business, and help them

discover where their skills, interests, and aspirations align, before they even enter the interview process.

The recruiting team cultivates relationships with students across multiple touchpoints before they step in for an interview. These touchpoints happen across various campus events that Scotiabank undertakes, to the tune of 300 to 400 events a year. The relationship-based approach typically follows the following sequence of large scale on-campus events:

- **Business Overview Events.** Educating students about the core business lines and opportunities that exist at Scotiabank.
- **Business Line Specific Sessions.** Scotiabank then goes back on campus to facilitate separate sessions aligned with different business lines, allowing students to explore and talk about specific areas of interest and related roles with Scotiabank's campus recruiters.

- **Behavioral Skills Master Classes.** Sessions focused on coaching students to prepare them for various stages of the recruiting process.
- **Sponsorships and Hackathons.** Competitive, innovative, and fun activities to get their interests hooked to the company.
- **Coffee Chats.** Personalized one-on-one career coaching conversations with students to address questions about the business, opportunities, and the hiring process.

The behavioral assessment is core to the relationship-based model (see Figure 3). The first time a candidate attends one of these events, they are invited to create a talent profile and take the behavioral assessment. Candidates can use the insights on strengths and opportunities to determine potential areas where they would fit.

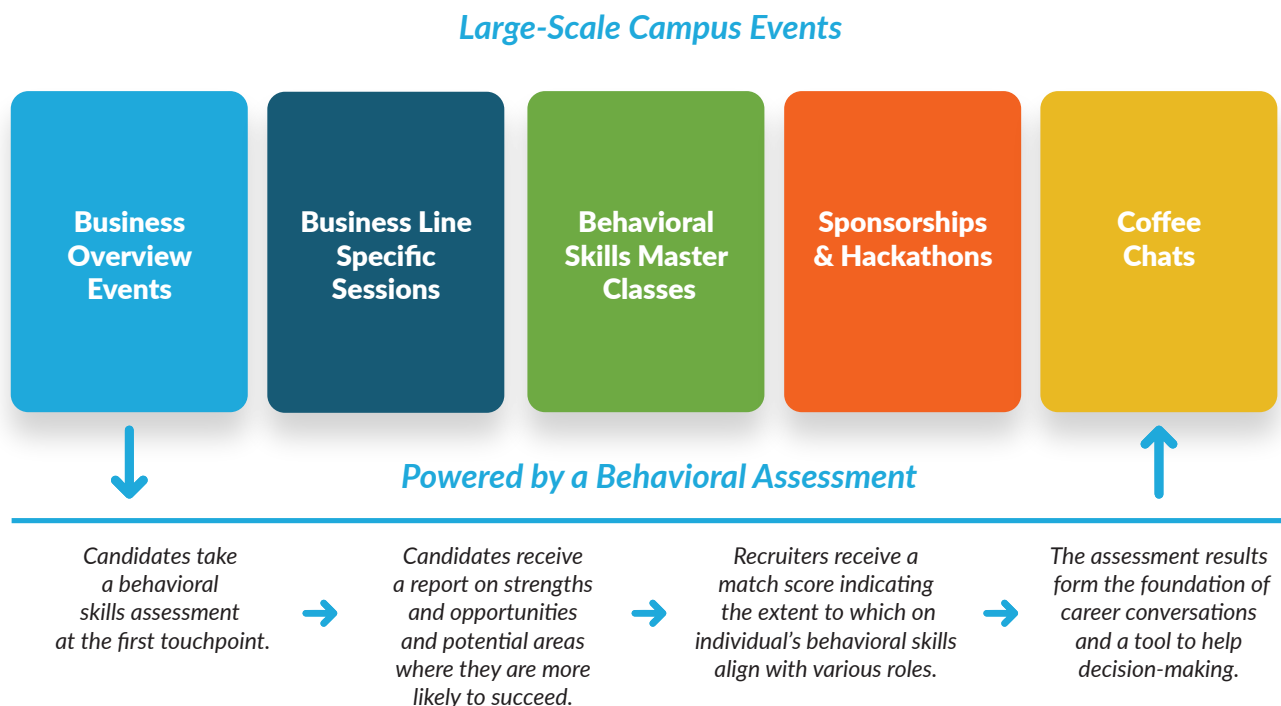
The assessment serves as validation for recruiters to ensure they're tapping the right candidates for various roles. It also

enables recruiters to help candidates navigate opportunities they may not have previously considered but could be good fits. For example, a candidate who is interested in pursuing a finance role is likely to be interested in commercial or wealth management roles as well, but they may not have considered those business lines.

Recruiters can see a candidate's match score for multiple open roles in the platform and provide career coaching to candidates to help navigate these opportunities, further strengthening candidate relationships with the business, providing an exceptional hiring experience, and amplifying the employer brand of Scotiabank.

"By the time students work their way through all the events, they've built phenomenal relationships with me, my team, with our business, and with our brand. Our approach keeps them coming back for more. When they're actually at the interview stage, they're already sold on Scotiabank, and they know what they want," said Cammisoli.

**Figure 3: Relationship-Based Model for Campus Hiring**



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2021

## Bringing Business Leaders on Board with the New Model

The new model held the promise of improving candidate experience and potentially bringing in more diverse students, but bringing this promise to fruition required education, communication, and coaching on how to act differently. For example, hiring managers needed to know what questions to ask and how to ask those questions to get the information that they would need to assess candidates in the absence of a resume.

Another important element in rolling out the new model was the coaching initiatives the recruiting team undertook to get business leaders and line managers up to speed and comfortable with the new process. They conducted workshops, train-the-trainer sessions on pertinent topics like managing unconscious bias, and a lot of large-group sessions, as well as one-on-one coaching for individuals who needed extra support.

## Business Impact

Going resumeless was a big and bold move for the business. It was well received by students, saving them a substantial amount of time that is typically invested in drafting resumes and cover letters. The new approach went a long way in improving the candidate experience. The conversion rates have been really high since the launch of the new approach, with positive reviews from hiring managers, leaders, and great feedback from students.

The new approach has expanded the reach of the company to a significantly larger number of schools (now more than 30 colleges and universities nationally) where candidates have been hired in the first year of its launch, compared to the

previous years. More people of color are now entering the workforce through campus hirings—with visible minorities representing close to 60% of the campus hiring intake. The retention rate of campus hires has almost doubled from 26% prelaunch to 46% postlaunch of the new approach. Hiring of women has also increased, now representing just over 50% of new campus hires. These statistics are not only the result of the new approach to recruitment but also the evolution of the organization's focus on early talent.

Scotiabank is actively considering linkages between the output of the behavioral assessment across other areas in the employee lifecycle. For example, the company is starting to use the assessment outputs to support employees' development and coaching needs.

Through its strategic transformation of the hiring process, the company has been successful in amplifying the experience across the entire spectrum of stakeholders involved—candidates, recruiters, and hiring managers—furthering its DEI agenda of bringing in more diverse candidates. The new approach to hiring also serves as a strong testimony to the humanistic brand that the company wants to build and sustain.

“

*This model helps us reinforce some of the things we strongly advocate as an organization: the promise of reducing bias, increased diversity of our talent pipeline, and a really strong message to our candidates—that we care about them, not their resume.”*

**Mehak Shoeb**  
Campus Recruitment Team Manager, Scotiabank

## About Josh Bersin



*Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Josh sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018.*

*In 2019, Josh founded the Josh Bersin Academy, a professional development academy that has become the "home for HR." In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world under the umbrella of The Josh Bersin Company. Recently published research covers topics such as hybrid work; HR technology market trends; employee experience; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. He is frequently featured in publications such as Forbes, Harvard Business Review, HR Executive, The Wall Street Journal, and CLO Magazine. He is a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn.*

## About Nehal Nangia



*Nehal is the senior manager for research at The Josh Bersin Company. In this role, Nehal drives empirical research on key workforce-related topics and the development of actionable insights and powerful stories for today's talent executives. Nehal has almost 15 years of professional experience in human capital, with a focus on performance management; employment value proposition; workforce transformation; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Prior to joining The Josh Bersin Company, Nehal was a global advisor for clients at Deloitte and published several studies on pertinent topics such as DEI, performance management, and bias. Nehal lives and works in India and has a master's degree in psychology.*