Chipotle Ava Cado hiring assistant

IMPLEMENTED 2024 ONWARDS · RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY · US · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY
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Chipotle rolled out Ava Cado, a conversational AI hiring assistant from Paradox, across its restaurants in October 2024. It collects applications, answers questions, schedules interviews and sends offers chosen by managers. Chipotle reports faster hiring and more completed applications.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Conversational AI hiring assistant ('Ava Cado') from Paradox, sold by Workday as the Paradox Candidate Experience Agent.

Implemented: 2024 onwards. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: Application to ready-to-hire in three and a half days, down from up to 12, by Chipotle's chief human resources officer, July 2025

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Chipotle Mexican Grill. US fast-casual restaurant chain with over 3,500 restaurants in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Kuwait and over 120,000 employees in 2024, by its own account. It owns and operates its restaurants in North America and Europe. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 5. People and skills, 6. Data and technology.

Business challenge

The challenge. Chipotle plans about 300 new restaurants a year and expects 9,000 to 10,000 new hires a year from openings alone, on top of vacancies at existing restaurants, by its chief human resources officer's account. Before the assistant, general managers scheduled all interviews themselves; a Chipotle product manager says they used their own phones to text candidates.

Who implemented it

Paradox (Software vendor): Supplies the conversational hiring platform behind Ava Cado..
Workday (Software vendor): Now sells the platform as the Workday Paradox Candidate Experience Agent..
Chipotle's human resources team led the rollout; any integrator is not reported.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T7 AI agents. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Paradox, Workday, Workday Paradox Candidate Experience Agent (Ava Cado).

Where it was built in: A conversational assistant on Chipotle's hiring flow, reached online or by QR code in restaurants, that fills in applications, answers questions, books interviews into managers' calendars and sends offer messages.

What changed

Before: general managers collected candidate details and scheduled every interview themselves. After: the assistant collects applications, schedules interviews and sends offers, and managers interview and choose, by Chipotle's account. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported

What it saved

By Chipotle's account: application to ready-to-hire in three and a half days, down from up to 12; about an 85% application completion rate; applications completed in around eight minutes; applicant numbers have "increased dramatically". Workday's customer story gives application to start date down from 12 days to four and completion up from 50% to 85% while applications doubled. Savings in money terms: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

Chipotle's chief human resources officer says Ava does not screen CVs or make employment decisions, and that managers continue to lead interviews and decide. Feedback from managers and candidates is described as anecdotal. Testing, monitoring and vendor controls: Not reported. CNBC noted that in July 2025 Paradox reported a security flaw found by researchers at a client Wired identified as McDonald's.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
Chief human resources officer Ilene Eskenazi announced the platform and reports its results; a named owner for the system is not stated. [1] [3]

A1 · Safe use · Not reported
Not reported.

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
Ava does not screen CVs or make employment decisions, and managers lead interviews and decide, by the chief human resources officer's account. [3]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
Chipotle reports completion rates and time to hire; it describes manager and candidate feedback as anecdotal. [3]

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
The assistant is Paradox's product, now owned by Workday; vendor controls are not reported. [4]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
Workday describes Ava as an AI agent that schedules interviews; limits on what it can do are not reported beyond managers selecting who gets an offer. [1] [4]

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Faster movement from application to ready to hire, by Chipotle's account.

– More completed applications and more applicants, by Chipotle's account.

– Less administrative work for general managers, especially interview scheduling, by Chipotle's account.

DID NOT

– Not reported. Chipotle describes the feedback it has from managers and candidates as anecdotal.

UNPROVEN

– How the reported time-to-hire figures were measured, and whether the 75% reduction expected at launch was reached on a consistent measure.

– Whether faster hiring improved retention or restaurant staffing levels: Not reported.

– Whether the planned extension to operational coaching for general managers will work: Chipotle has not said what it will look like or when it will arrive.

Timeline

Oct 2024 Chipotle announces Ava Cado across more than 3,500 restaurants [1]

Feb 2025 Chipotle says it will use the platform to help hire more than 20,000 workers for its busiest season [5]

Jul 2025 Chief human resources officer reports results to CNBC [3]

Oct 2026 Chief executive calls Ava Cado the company's in-restaurant AI assistant and plans a wider scope [5]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Process change.

Process change (Level 2, band C). The hiring workflow in each restaurant changed: the assistant runs the application and scheduling steps and managers decide. No change to jobs, teams or sourcing is reported.

A restaurant hiring process redesigned so the assistant handles applications, questions, interview scheduling and offer messages, with reported changes in cycle time and completion rates. Managers still interview and decide, and no change to jobs or structure is reported.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

Chipotle aimed the assistant at an administrative bottleneck, interview scheduling by restaurant managers, and kept hiring decisions with managers. The results come only from Chipotle and its vendor, and they cannot be separated from Chipotle's wider hiring drive and growth plans. Before copying the approach, a leadership team should ask how it will measure time to hire on a consistent basis, and how it checks the security and fairness of a vendor platform that talks to every applicant.

1. Start with the hiring step that takes managers' time.
2. Keep the hiring decision with a named manager.
3. Define time to hire once and measure it the same way throughout.

Evidence

Score 2 of 4. Self-reported: Chipotle's release and named executives quoted by CBS and CNBC, with the vendor's customer story; no independent check.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: Chipotle's release, statements by its chief human resources officer and chief executive to CBS and CNBC, and Workday's customer story. Baselines are not published.

Sources disagree. Chipotle's release says Ava sends offers to candidates selected by managers; CBS reported that the AI can make job offers in real time, the company said; CNBC reports that it does not make employment decisions. The time measure differs: application to ready to hire in three and a half days from up to 12 (CNBC), application to start date from 12 days to four (Workday), and application to first day from 12 days to four (Fast Casual). The restaurant count is over 3,500 in 2024 and 4,000-plus in Workday's story.

Status. Ongoing: in October 2026 Chipotle's chief executive called Ava Cado the company's in-

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/chipotle-ava-cado-ai-hiring-assistant

[1] Chipotle: Chipotle Introduces New AI Hiring Platform to Support Its Accelerated Growth (October 2024)
https://newsroom.chipotle.com/2024-10-22-CHIPOTLE-INTRODUCES-NEW-AI-HIRING-PLATFORM-TO-SUPPORT-ITS-ACCELERATED-GROWTH

[2] CBS News: Chipotle turns to AI hiring platform to screen job applicants (October 2024)
https://www.cbsnews.com/news/chipotle-ava-cado-ai-hiring/

[3] CNBC, via NBC Chicago: Chipotle's AI hiring tool is helping it find new workers 75% faster (July 2025)
https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/business/money-report/chipotles-ai-hiring-tool-is-helping-it-find-new-workers-75-faster/3799408/

[4] Workday: Chipotle leverages conversational AI to scale hiring (customer story)
https://www.workday.com/en-us/customer-stories/a-h/chipotle-leverages-conversational-ai-scales-hiring.html

[5] Fast Casual: From AI to catering: 8 ways Chipotle is retooling for growth (October 2026)
https://www.fastcasual.com/articles/from-ai-to-catering-8-ways-chipotle-is-retooling-for-growth/

Chipotle Mexican Grill website: https://www.chipotle.com

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VERSION HISTORY

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