

## Customer Centricity: NPS Interview Report

Keith	Keith VanOrden, The TCW Group
NPS	10
Engagement	ES
Interview Date	13.11.25

## Interview Report

Overview	<p>Keith is the US Head of Retail Distribution at TCW Group. He has partnered with Korn Ferry for approximately two years, primarily engaging with Chris for sales and sales-leadership hiring. His experience is strongly shaped by the long-standing personal relationship with Chris, built originally when he acted as a reference on a separate search years earlier. Keith continues to use Korn Ferry exclusively for sales hiring.</p> <p>His feedback is consistently positive and centres on trust, alignment, responsiveness, and the perceived quality of candidates. Keith highlighted no major pain points, though he offered reflections on broader support he would value, such as peer networking.</p>
What Went Well	<p><b>Strong, trusted relationship.</b> The relationship with Chris is Keith's primary reason for repeatedly choosing Korn Ferry: <i>"We just hit it off based on shared beliefs around talent and culture...I trust him with my business...Anywhere Chris went, I would go."</i></p> <p><b>Thoroughness and care in delivery.</b> A notable early experience shaped Keith's perception: <i>"The detail and the care that he put into [the reference check]... I was just so impressed."</i></p> <p><b>Deep understanding of the business and role requirements.</b> <i>"They know what we're trying to build at TCW. They know what's important to me...They find people that fit that jointly agreed-upon profile."</i></p> <p><b>High-quality, diverse candidate slates.</b> The candidate quality repeatedly exceeded expectations: <i>"It was an impressive slate...I ended up with this great person that I never would have uncovered...My probably number one wholesaler... is somebody that came from Korn Ferry."</i></p> <p><b>Effective thought partnership.</b> The team constructively challenged Keith's assumptions: <i>"They pushed me... I have natural bias... They force you into this 'what's really important' conversation."</i></p> <p><b>Strong communication and responsiveness.</b> <i>"If I need more, I kind of get more...We connect almost immediately...The cadence has been really good."</i></p> <p><b>Useful application of assessment tools.</b> Keith actively uses the KF assessment to onboard and manage new hires: <i>"Yes, I use that tool. I find it very helpful."</i></p>
Challenges/ Pain Points	<p>Keith did not raise operational issues with current search delivery.</p> <p>The only challenge mentioned relates to an earlier structural change in how the engagement team was resourced (see "Gaps identified").</p>

<b>Gaps Identified (raised by interviewee)</b>	<p><b>Does not engage with broader Korn Ferry services by default.</b> Keith does not naturally consider Korn Ferry for non-search offerings due to limited headspace, not dissatisfaction. <i>“When I need something, I go looking... I don’t often pick my head up and look around...I get great emails... I just don’t ever find the time.”</i></p> <p><b>Would value curated peer networking.</b> <i>“If networking became part of that... that would be helpful.”</i> Keith described current industry forums as <i>“exhausting”</i> and lacking meaningful value but would welcome Korn Ferry-facilitated smaller peer groups.</p> <p><b>Preference against AI-driven approaches.</b> Keith clearly stated a desire for <b>human-led</b> search: <i>“I would hate it if... there’s weird AI searches”</i> and <i>“The slower Korn Ferry is to adopt some of the AI stuff... probably the better.”</i></p>
<b>Key Themes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Relationship-first decision-making:</b> trust in Chris is central to continued engagement.</li> <li>2. <b>Human judgement is critical:</b> Keith values intuition, care, cultural insight and personal involvement.</li> <li>3. <b>Responsiveness builds confidence:</b> fast access and direct communication enhance trust.</li> <li>4. <b>Candidate quality differentiates the experience:</b> consistently strong fits and diverse experience profiles.</li> <li>5. <b>Thought partnership matters:</b> proactive challenge improves role clarity and reduces bias.</li> <li>6. <b>Interest in value beyond search:</b> specifically networking, not consulting products.</li> <li>7. <b>Appetite for curated peer networking:</b> Keith sees value in Korn Ferry-facilitated small-group peer discussions, not large industry events.</li> <li>8. <b>Low appetite for AI in the search process:</b> concern that it diminishes the human element Keith values.</li> </ol>
<b>Actions &amp; Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Strengthen proactive peer-networking offers</b> Facilitate curated, small-group peer connections in key markets or sectors. Keep these non-commercial and relationship-focused.</p> <p><b>Continue prioritising consultant continuity and personal involvement</b> Maintain direct consultant engagement at all stages, as this is the central value driver for clients like him.</p> <p><b>Preserve human-led search as a core differentiator</b> If AI tools are added, ensure they enhance rather than replace personal judgement, relationship building and nuanced understanding. Clearly communicate that consultants remain central.</p> <p><b>Leverage assessment insights more explicitly in onboarding guidance</b> Highlight how behavioural profiles can support team integration, early performance and manager alignment.</p>
<b>Additional Insight</b>	<p><b>Clear prioritisation of relationship</b> Although Keith acknowledged that the Korn Ferry name helps secure candidate engagement, his loyalty is driven by the personal relationship: <i>“Anywhere Chris went, I would go.”</i></p>