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The Right Process for the Right IT Staff

Top Ten Tips for Hiring Top Talent

In a Candidate Driven Market

The market for technical talent has long been a candidate driven one. Now with more tech start-ups created every day, along with the surge in the demand for digital solutions for more traditional companies, the market has become immensely competitive. So how do you fill your tech positions with the best talent? Here are our top ten tips for employing top technical talent in a candidate driven market.

1

Create a Compelling Job Description



One of the first things your potential new employee will see is your Job Description or Job Advert. First impressions count. Make sure you sell on the opportunity: What will they be doing? What will they learn? What projects are coming up? What will they be doing on a day-to-day basis? Ensure you are not simply replacing like for like; and sit down and discuss with your tech team which skills would be good to bring into the mix. Talk about the projects, best practice and stack that you are using, then list the skills you want in order of preference/importance. Ideally no more than 5 essential skills, you don't want a massive list that excludes people.

2

Optimise Your Talent Brand

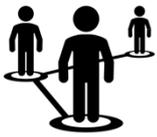


Everyone is familiar with the concept of brand identity for a product or service, but many people forget about their "Talent Brand". Your Talent Brand is what makes your company a desirable place to work. It is the impression people have about your company culture, how it will be perceived on their CV and what they will get out of joining you in terms of self-development. If you think of tech giants like Google and LinkedIn, part of their appeal is a very strong talent brand, that means top talent are excited about working there, before they even reach out to them.

Think about what makes your company amazing to work for; do you have an awesome workplace? Do you have some of the top people in the community working for you? Are you known for using the latest tools? Do you have a great culture? Whatever it is that makes working for you special, get it out there, through a dedicated careers page, LinkedIn page and social media separate from the main brand. Get people talking about you before you they even see your job advert.

3

Ask for Referrals from Existing Employees



When trying to attract top technical talent, some hiring managers forget the wealth of information and knowledge they already have access to from their current team. Ask your existing team to share your job advert on social media and recommend people they know (incentivise this perhaps with a bonus for recommendations resulting in successful hires). Get them involved in your talent brand, writing testimonials for your page, reviews on Glassdoor, LinkedIn and Facebook. People like working with their friends, so by doing this you might uncover some hidden gems that you will not get elsewhere.

4

Send your Team to Events / Sponsor Events



There are loads of really good events, meetups and conferences where you can send your employees to improve their knowledge and promote your talent brand. Better still sponsor events, it need not cost the earth, you could simply pay for after-event drinks, or hand out leaflets, or maybe even pizza at a meetup. If you can get one of your senior tech specialists to do a talk in the main conference, or a lightning talk at the unconference, this will also do wonders for promoting your brand. If you do not know which events to go to, ask your team. These are brilliant for meeting really passionate, engaged and active community members to really bolster your squad.



Top drawer recruiters, like our Senior Consultants at [Edison Hill](#), spend years building massive networks in their target markets, giving them unprecedented reach. This means they are often instantly able to recommend candidates for your roles and reach out to passive candidates who are simply not on the market elsewhere.

A really good recruiter will know your industry inside out and be working with IT craftsmen for years, be known to the community and be able to advise you on market conditions and what is most attractive to candidates. This means you will hire the best available technical talent “in the market”, not just “on the market”. Using an expert recruiter will save you time by streamlining the job process, managing applications and cutting down on the number of interviews hiring managers need to conduct, letting them get on with their main jobs.

If you find the right recruiter, they can be an unbelievably valuable asset in your hunt for technical talent. Why not call us now on 020 3762 2020 and book a free consultation with one of our Senior Consultants to see how Edison Hill can help you create the right process for the right IT staff?

6

Have a Fast, Yet Thorough Interview Process



So, you have written an amazing job advert, a compelling job spec, and have a brand that makes people want work for you. You have networked, hired the best recruiters and got some brilliant candidates into interview. So why are you still not filling your roles?

One of the main areas that companies fall down on is the interview process. This is a highly charged candidate driven market. Technical candidates are getting hounded by recruiters daily and will probably have multiple options and even offers in a matter of weeks, if not days. A long cumbersome interview process will ensure that they do not even get to offer stage with you, as they will have accepted something else. Don't rush the process but remember you do have probation periods and you need to be agile and fast, or you will be left with whatever is left, after your competitors have hoovered up the best.

Slow response time on CVs, tech tests and interview feedback can really put a spanner in the works. Try to commit to feedback within at least 48 hours (ideally 24 hours), even if it is a rejection, as you never know who the not quite right candidate knows and might be able to recommend. If someone has taken the time to go to your interview/do a technical test, then do them the courtesy of decent feedback. It will hurt your brand if you don't. When you find someone good but who doesn't quite tick every box, make an offer, or you may well find they have gone by the time you decide they were right after all.

That leads me on to the next point....

7

Really Insightful Technical Testing



Technical tests, essential for making a decision when hiring an IT professional right? Wrong. Most recruiters, hiring managers and candidates hate technical tests. When they are working a full-time job the last thing they want to do is take, or score a technical test, that can take hours and often is not even relevant to the job.

Technical tests might be one of the biggest reasons you do not get the best candidates. By the time you contact them, they may have already been asked to complete multiple, time consuming tests. If you haven't even spoken to them in the first instance, you can expect to go to the bottom of the pile.

Technical testing can form an essential part of the process, but it must not bog it down under any circumstance.

The best way is to have a good technical discussion between the hiring manager and the applicant. Do some pair programming and see how they make decisions and actually work and find out if they are compatible with the culture of the team. Ask for code samples and go through them at interview. Candidates love the feedback and you will make a better decision on their skills and get the skills you want. Win-win for all.

8

Use Social Media



Struggling to get good advert responses? This could be because you are looking in the wrong places. Technical professionals simply do not tend to hang out on job boards, they are so in demand they rarely have to upload their CV before hordes of recruiters call them and they take it back down. Where do tech professionals hang out? The answer is social media. Technical professionals were on social media before everyone else and still utilise these platforms the most, to exchange ideas and communicate news with in the industry.

Make sure you have a presence on the main boards, not just LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, but look at Stack Overflow, online forums, Redditt and Instagram. Do not try to do too many areas at once, it is worth consulting your team to see what they use and do those things really well. Reach out to people using messaging and in-mails and target any adverts carefully to keep appearing in the feeds of your desired candidates.

9

Tell it as it is (Warts and All)



It is so important that a prospective employee gets a complete picture of the pros and cons of joining your team. It is not unknown for recruiters and hiring managers to try and tempt the best talent with an unrealistic job description or impression of working conditions, only for the new starter to find out that they were not given the full picture or were straight up lied to. After all the time you spent finding the perfect technical specialist, do not ruin it by losing them by being anything less than honest.

Be totally upfront about any challenges, technical and cultural, that they will be facing. This helps them assess whether they are firstly able to do the job and secondly if they want to. Many tech professionals relish a challenge and appreciate the honesty. Don't bend the truth either, if you say you are looking to expand and then they find out that this actually won't be for another 5 years, or say that they will get to use Java, only to find that this won't be the case for x amount of time, you will get a very disgruntled employee and you will damage your image in the market. Be honest and you will get a dedicated team member, ready to tackle whatever the job throws at them.

10

Offer Fast and Fair



Time kills deals, no doubt about it. It is important to move fast to secure your preferred new team member, however it is equally important to put forward the right offer. People like to feel valued, so putting in a low-ball offer in hopes of saving the company a couple of hundred or thousand pounds, can be very off putting. Your competitors will be offering at least the minimum of the candidates' salary expectations. If you come in lower, you are unlikely to secure the candidate and if you do, there is a good chance they will leave when someone else offers them a more competitive package. Always offer fair, according to the skill level of the candidate, If they are asking for too much, explain why you feel they are not at that level and what they can do to improve (in or out of the organisation). Never low ball. Ever.