

RETHINKING THE TECH TALENT WAR

Creative Strategies to Win Big

Tech hiring is a story of highs and lows—high demand for extremely specific skills alongside the lowest unemployment levels seen in decades. Here, GR8 People assesses the tech hiring landscape, which we believe reveals several opportunities for talent acquisition teams that understand America's emerging tech markets, as well as the value prospective candidates place on personalization and relevance.

TECH WORKFORCE CHALLENGES SHOW NO SIGNS OF EASING.

Experienced technical recruiters won't be surprised in the least to see that, according to a CompTIA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the unemployment rate for technology occupations fell to 1.3% in May. This represents a 20-year low, one that's further complicated by a decreasing number of H1-B visa petitions and approvals.

Another challenge is that America's existing tech candidate pool continues to lack diversity, which ongoing research clearly demonstrates is a big barrier to innovation. Unfortunately, diversity within tech isn't on track for much improvement based on data from the Center for Education Statistics—62% of computer science majors in the 2015-16 academic year were white. Only 10% were black, 12% were Hispanic and 7% were Asian. And fewer than 20% were women.

2019 Tech Talent Demands

Top 3 Jobs¹

- Cybersecurity engineer
- AI/machine learning engineer
- Full stack developer

Top 5 Technical Skills²

- JavaScript (70%)
- SQL (57%)
- Java (48%)
- HTML/CSS (46%)
- .NET/C# (41%)

¹TechRepublic

²Devskiller Global Technical Hiring & Skills Report

HOW CAN TECHNICAL RECRUITERS ADAPT?

Success may seem out of reach given the factors outlined above, yet there are several actions recruiting teams can take in order to attract in-demand technical talent while generating a more diverse pool of candidates. More specifically, hiring trends and data reveal five strategies organizations can employ for better tech recruiting outcomes.

1. Reconsider target markets and telecommuting policies to expand access to talent pools.

While traditional tech markets are still driving most high-tech job growth, these markets are shifting as new cities lure tech companies in search of both talent and lower operating costs. Among the North American metros identified as emerging tech markets:

St. Louis
Montreal
Toronto
Charlotte
Los Angeles
Orange County

Source: [Visual Capitalist](#)

Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska
Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama
Ames and Des Moines, Iowa
Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri

Source: [MarketWatch](#)

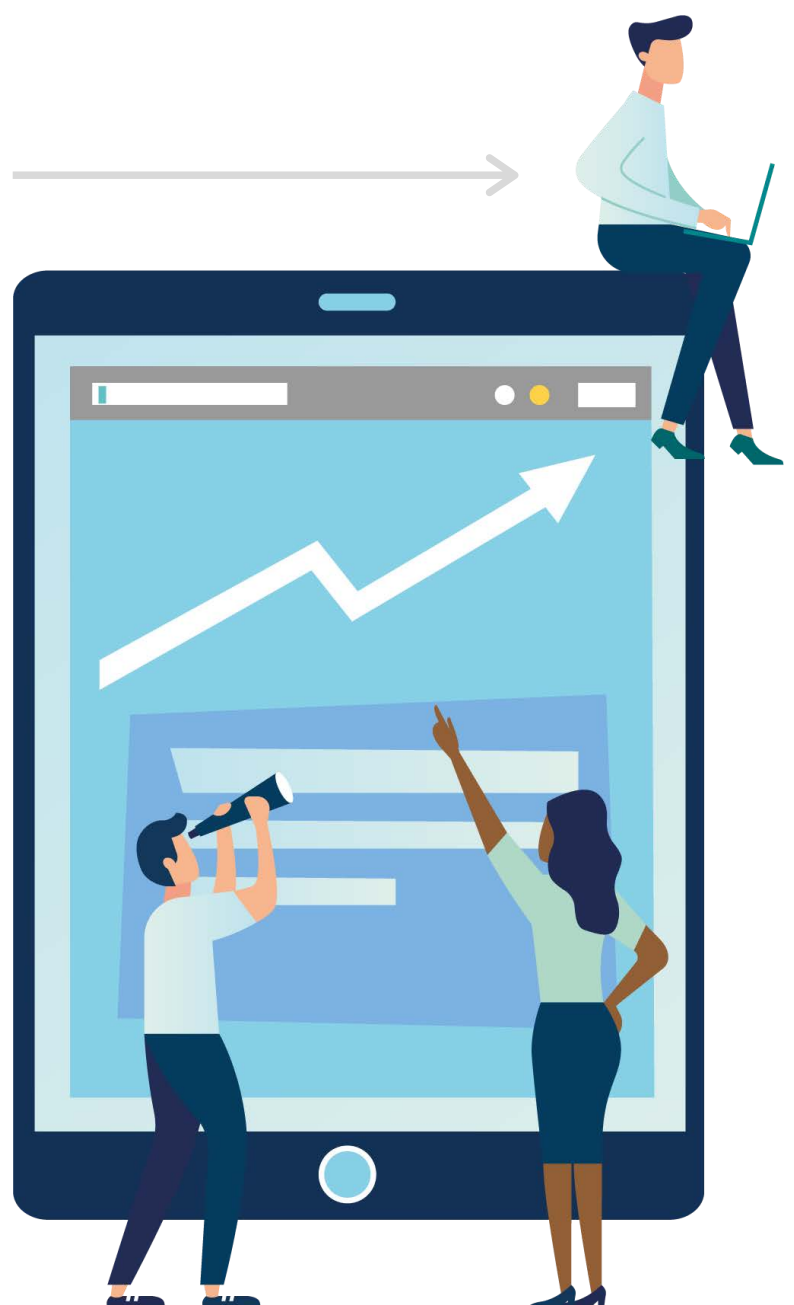
2. Understand what matters most to tech workers in an employer and how that may differ by audience segment so that messaging can be personalized.

Targeting an audience of passive and in demand candidates requires messaging that resonates immediately, so make sure your outreach focuses solely on the attributes that are meaningful.

For example, the Stack Overflow Talent 2018 Global Develop Hiring Landscape survey finds that tech workers view learning as a lifelong aspect of their work—nearly 90% report that “they have taught themselves a new language, framework, or tool outside of their formal education.” Career development and new opportunities are also important. More than one-third of technical workers say they want to be in a “different or more specialized technical role” in the future.

In addition to highlighting employee stories that reflect growth and learning, offer specific details up front in order to generate interest. Stack Overflow also reports that along with career development opportunities, tech workers prioritize compensation and benefits and the languages, frameworks and other technologies used on the job.

However, keep in mind that your messaging may need to shift depending on candidate demographics. A recent Dice e-book, *What Tech Talent Wants*, emphasizes that female tech professionals often have different values regarding employer attributes. Namely, benefits outrank salary as the #1 attribute, while manageable working hours takes the #3 spot among women, compared to #8 for men.



3. Leverage artificial intelligence for better candidate matching results & to automate candidate communications.



One of the more troubling aspects of Dice's research is the prevalence of tech workers who say they are regularly contacted about opportunities that are irrelevant based on their experience and interests. In fact, roughly half of all technical professionals say that the reason they don't respond to recruiter outreach is simply because "the job doesn't match their interests."

To be fair to recruiters—who are under incredible pressure to produce candidates—sourcing takes up an extraordinary amount of time and is often akin to finding a needle in a haystack. However, recruiting teams can dramatically improve accuracy by looking to AI-driven sourcing technology to do the heavy lifting when it comes to matching candidates against specific job criteria. This can help ensure that recruiter outreach is relevant, thereby increasing response rates.

Once ideal matches are made, automation can be used to immediately notify candidates of a match and encourage them to apply via email (yes, tech pros prefer email over a phone call for initial outreach). Templates should be structured to include the details tech workers seek at this stage, such as compensation ranges, how they're a fit for the role and the technologies used most frequently by the organization. If these details are missing, you'll be far less likely to get a response from prospective candidates.

4. Use automated reminders for skills testing, and schedule them on days known for the fastest response.

Most organizations require coding tests as part of the recruiting process, and 73% of tech workers who responded to Devskiller's survey report taking the coding tests that are sent to them. Devskiller also finds that the average time for completion among developers is 2.88 days from receiving the testing notification. Tuesdays seem to generate the fastest turnaround times, while Wednesdays are linked to the longest turnaround times. It also appears that developers aren't doing these tests over the weekend. They're far more likely to complete a coding test during the week, so forget about sending a coding test invitation on a Friday.

Automated reminders sent from an applicant tracking system (ATS) can reduce coding test completion times, too, especially if they're scheduled for days of the week that typically result in faster turnaround times. Make sure to track the results so you can demonstrate how automation is positively impacting overall time to hire.



5. Target bootcamp graduates by connecting with area programs and including “bootcamp” as a keyword for candidate matching.

Technical training bootcamps—both those offered through traditional colleges and universities and those at standalone schools—are on the rise. They’re not just for workers seeking to transition to tech, either. Stack Overflow notes that 45.5% of respondents indicated that they “already had a full-time job as a developer” when starting a bootcamp program.

From the employer perspective, Indeed’s research suggests that the quality of bootcamp graduates is high with 72% of employers indicating that “bootcamp grads are ‘just as prepared’ to be high performers as degree holders” are, while nearly all who have hired a coding bootcamp grad for a technical role say “they would do so again.”

Perhaps one of the most promising aspects of bootcamp recruiting is that it may address the profession’s lack of diversity. More than half (51%) of the companies surveyed by Indeed feel that “hiring bootcamp grads is a good way to help job seekers from underrepresented groups find work in the technology sector.”

WHAT WILL YOUR TECH RECRUITING REVOLUTION LOOK LIKE?

Connecting with tech talent requires challenging everything about the way most organizations approach recruitment. The good news is that there’s plenty of available data and insights to help guide talent acquisition teams as they revisit messaging and markets, and as they determine the technology investments needed in order to revolutionize the way they attract, hire and retain tech talent.



GR8 People is 100 percent purpose-built to deliver the unfair advantage companies demand to compete for talent around the world. It is the talent platform that brings CRM, recruitment marketing, applicant tracking/hiring, and onboarding together; connecting entire talent ecosystems with one-experience to perform branding, sourcing, recruitment marketing, hiring, strategic communications and so much more.

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