

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO HIRING TOP TALENT



5

Essentials to help you find and retain
the best technology candidates

rh Robert Half®
Technology

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HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS GUIDE

A note from John Reed, senior executive director of Robert Half Technology



If you're like me, you continue to read about how hot the technology job market is.

Most research, including that from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, ranks the tech sector's unemployment rate well below almost every other industry. In a market this competitive, you are likely having a difficult time finding the best technology candidates, let alone keeping the talent you already have.

How many times have you had a position sit unstaffed because you couldn't find the right fit? Or, you found the right fit, but you lost the candidate to a different company? What's even more daunting is that as a hiring manager, hiring is only part of the game. Retention and management are the other parts, both of which can take considerable time and resources.

While there are no shortcuts to hiring top talent, you can use this guide to help throughout your process — from the initial candidate search to wrapping up that final interview.

Best of luck,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

John Reed

STREAMLINING THE HIRING PROCESS



Take the hassle out of hiring. Here are five ways to make the process more efficient.

Long gone are the days when you could be very selective about which candidates to interview and then stretch out your evaluations to ensure the absolute best fit. Today, it's critical to streamline the technology hiring process. To be clear, this doesn't mean you need to have lax standards and form quick opinions about candidates. Instead, you should look for ways to make your hiring practices more efficient.

1. Define your needs

When hiring for a technology role, you need to create two lists: The first should note all the technology skills essential for the position. Look for proficiency with specific technologies as well as a pattern of being able to master the latest and greatest with ease. The second list should focus on the intangible qualities that make IT professionals successful on your team. This might include having everything from strong communication and interpersonal skills to a flexible mindset.

2. Don't wing it

Also make sure you've created a written list of interview questions so there's consistency to your technology hiring process. You may need to add customized questions for each applicant — for instance, to discuss unique aspects of their backgrounds — but otherwise everyone should be asked the same questions. This will make it simple to compare candidates.

3. Have experts meet with experts

Need to hire a mobile applications developer but think Unity3d sounds more like a charity than a key hiring criterion? Then it's time to pass the baton to employees who can make the best candidate assessments. Have your top mobile applications developer meet with applicants for similar roles to ask targeted questions.

4. Avoid too many cooks in the kitchen

Be careful, though, that your technology hiring process isn't bogged down by too many decision makers. It's hard to streamline things if you have to take into account an unwieldy number of opinions. Get the right people involved in interviews and ask for their input, but make the ultimate selection yourself.

5. Limit the number of interviews

Finally, be sure you're not dragging in candidates for multiple rounds of interviews. If you do this, you may find that people are no longer available by the time you call for that fourth or fifth interview.

Consolidate key interviews into one or two appointments. For instance, you might meet with applicants first, then send them on to talk with other managers and potential colleagues.

ASKING THE RIGHT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ask these seven interview questions to ensure you're getting the most revealing responses from technology candidates.

1. Can you tell me about a recent project or process that you made better, faster, smarter, more efficient or less expensive?

You need technology professionals who understand the big-picture impact of their work. Candidates should be able to explain how their efforts made a difference for their employers.

2. You've just been assigned to a project involving a new technology. How would you get started?

This question will give you insight into how people handle technology products with which they have less expertise. What steps would they take to overcome a knowledge gap and ensure they still get things done on time?

3. With your eyes closed, tell me step-by-step how to tie my shoes. Also, how many times do a clock's hands overlap in a day?

Applicants will be challenged to think about and explain a process, which showcases their problem-solving and communication skills.

4. What technology-related blogs, podcasts, Twitter accounts or websites do you follow? Do you share any information yourself online?

This reveals whether candidates are staying up on trends. Do they have a sincere interest in technology and want to keep learning?

5. What three character traits would your friends use to describe you?

This question can clue you in to personality characteristics or qualities that may not be apparent through the resume or traditional interview questions.

6. Can you tell me about a time when things didn't go the way you wanted at work, such as a project that failed or being passed over for a promotion?

The best candidates will use setbacks as springboards toward positive changes, such as getting a certification that will help position them for advancement next time there's an opportunity.

7. What are your favorite and least favorite technology products, and why?

In addition to learning whether people like the products you use at your company, this question helps you gauge their enthusiasm and knowledge.

Interviewing a developer? Here are additional interview questions you can ask:

- Name three primary attributes of object-oriented design. Describe what they mean and why they're important.
- What do you do when you get stuck with a problem you can't solve?
- What elements of object-oriented design are most prone to abuse? How would you mitigate that?
- Describe some bad code you've read or inherited lately.



ATTRACTING CANDIDATES WITH SALARY AND PERKS

It's a blazing hot market for technology professionals. Make sure you nab the best person for the job by offering more than just a competitive salary.

With no sign that demand for tech pros will slow, it can be hard to find the right talent, let alone seal the deal with a job offer your best candidate will accept. That means it's time to take your hiring efforts up a notch. Here's what you can do to recruit top technology professionals.

Pay up — fast

According to the most recent [Robert Half Technology Salary Guide](#), salaries for technology jobs are expected to continue their upward trajectory, with even bigger gains for the hottest specialties.

Pay may not be the only consideration for job seekers, but you can put yourself out of the running if you're offering less than your competitors. If you aren't able to adjust salaries, think about the entire compensation package. A signing bonus, profit sharing, tuition reimbursement and performance bonuses are a few incentives that can stand out to candidates.

Once you've identified the best contender, make an offer immediately. Wait too long these days and you'll find your top choice has already accepted another offer.

The benefit of perks

Getting candidates to accept an offer often means not just offering competitive salaries, but creating a work environment that's satisfying and enhances productivity. To stand out, many tech firms are offering creative incentives in addition to generous compensation packages.

Check out the sidebar to the right for more information on five of the leading perks some companies offer to attract and retain top talent.

Stay up on salary and industry trends

Just as salary isn't the only variable top candidates weigh, neither are the fun freebies you offer. Attracting and retaining employees is all about striking the right balance. To give you an edge, download our Salary Guide to get the latest salary data for more than 75 IT positions plus information on perks and benefits, industry hiring trends, and more.

For starting salaries in your local market, check out our [Salary Calculator](#).

Top 5 Leading Perks

1. Meals and snacks

Free meals and snacks were unusual before the dot-com boom. Now, many workers favor employers that provide food options during the workday.

2. Professional development

Technology is always evolving, so it's essential that IT professionals keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Many employers today offer reimbursement for professional development and educational opportunities.

3. Family leave

Balancing work and family is tricky for busy professionals — especially when a new baby is involved. Some companies offer extended (and paid) maternity and paternity leave, and even provide small cash bonuses that can be used for child care.

4. On-site health services

Healthy employees tend to be happy employees. Help support workers' well-being by providing on-site access to services ranging from chiropractic care to acupuncture to health coaching.

5. A clean house

Who has time for chores? To free employees from domestic tasks, some companies offer paid housecleaning or dry cleaning services.



SPOTTING AND AVOIDING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Keep key staff members where they belong — on your team. Here are five warning signs.

Do your employees have one foot out the door? If you've been too busy to check in, this could be the case. Make sure you have a retention strategy — and know the signs to look for if your employees are beginning to stray. Here are five to keep an eye out for.

1. Increased absences or time away from the office

Employees who are interviewing for other jobs take time away from the office to attend interviews and investigate potential employees. If you see your employees taking more days off than normal or increasing their time out of the office during the day, you might have you cause for concern.

2. Changes in attire

Employees who are trying to put their best foot forward as candidates will want to look sharp and interview ready. If you notice an employee upping his wardrobe game at the office, this might indicate he's interviewing for other roles. For example, if someone on your team typically wears khakis and a polo and you see him in a dress shirt, slacks and a sport coat, this might indicate he's meeting with potential employers.

3. Decreased communication or disengagement

If you notice staff members decreasing their level of communication, keeping to themselves more or disengaging entirely, it's a potential indicator that they have mentally "moved on."

4. Changes in their personal workspace

Things like removal of personal photos or sudden cleanliness of the workspace can be signs that an employee is preparing to leave.

5. Increased private conversations

When you see employees with their doors closed more frequently, or having cell phone discussions in the hall or outside the building, these may be signs they are pursuing new opportunities or contemplating potential offers.

Avoiding employee turnover

So how do you avoid employee turnover? First and foremost, communication. Don't wait for these signs to appear. Rather, schedule regular one-on-one meetings so you can remediate any concerns as they arise and avoid surprise resignations.

The 5 Most Difficult Personalities to Manage in Tech

1. The wallflower

This employee is a classic introvert, preferring to work quietly and with minimal intervention.

2. The know-it-all

Think stereotypical — and self-described — "tech genius" who's often short, impatient and frustrated that no one else has the same level of expertise.

3. The panic attack

When you think of this team member, you probably don't think cool under the collar. In fact, quite the opposite.

4. The laid-back pro

While this employee is no doubt skilled and competent, he or she often leaves others worried whether the job will get done on time.

5. The competitor

This person views everything as a contest and sometimes steps on toes just to "win."

Click to learn how to [manage these personalities](#).

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF TECHNOLOGY STAFFING AGENCIES



Do you have a strategic hiring plan? Here are five ways a technology staffing agency can help.

For many hiring managers, today's job market can feel like a race to identify top tech talent, bring them on board before a competitor does and keep up with changes in the tech world. You're not alone in that race.

As we discussed earlier in this guide, employers are upping the ante with competitive salaries and benefits to keep abreast of new hiring conditions.

Where technology staffing agencies come in

Working with a specialized technology staffing agency will not only help you gain a competitive edge securing the best talent, but doing so can also help you save time and money. Here are five ways a staffing agency can help.

1. Save time

When coverage is lean and your core team is stretched thin, you may not have the time to address staffing gaps. A reputable firm can provide highly skilled individuals who can offer immediate temporary assistance to meet your specific needs.

2. Prevent productivity losses

The best technology staffing agencies understand that your requirements can change overnight, and they have the flexibility and speed to assist you with urgent needs. They can provide tech workers who will contribute immediately, helping you avoid days or even weeks of lost productivity.

3. Identify needs

An experienced staffing agency may know your needs before you do. It can serve as a knowledgeable guide when you embark on new projects or service offerings, helping you determine which professionals meet your particular needs and the optimal staffing mix, whether it's full-time, temporary or a blend of both.

4. Locate potential hires

The best staffing agencies can identify candidates you might not otherwise meet — highly skilled individuals who may not be actively looking for a new opportunity. And they can find people quickly.

5. Avoid poor hiring decisions

Hiring a new full-time staff member can take months of planning and interviewing — valuable time that most businesses simply don't have. But rushing the process is not the answer — hiring mistakes cost time and money. A staffing agency can sort through resumes and present you with the most promising candidates so you can focus on running the business.

Find, Hire, Lead, Repeat

We want to be more than your staffing resource, we want to be there for all things related to the technology industry — from hiring and leadership to staying innovative and competitive.

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for more hiring and management resources to help you find skilled talent, bring them on board and lead them to success.

HIRE WISELY

Now that you have the insider information you need — from streamlining the hiring process to relying on recruiting experts — you're set to attract, hire and retain top technology candidates. It's our pleasure to help all our clients achieve their staffing goals, regardless of company size or hiring needs. Visit [our website](#) or [contact one of our branches](#) to begin your candidate search with Robert Half Technology.

About Robert Half Technology

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For additional hiring resources, check out our [tech blog](#) and visit our [Salary Center](#) to download our most recent Salary Guide.

Contact Robert Half Technology at 1.888.793.5533 or roberthalf.com/technology to learn more about how we can help you make the most informed hiring decisions.

