SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

Talent Directory – Candidate Profiling Paper 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Acolyte is revolutionising how HR & Talent Professionals access and use talent data to drive effective recruitment.

Whether your workforce strategy is focused attracting the strongest talent or retaining existing staff, Acolyte uses big data, analytics and human experience to give you a unique perspective on your talent landscape.

Acolyte helps HR leaders embed recruitment success throughout their business by providing, crystal clear insight, a fresh perspective, a clear roadmap, and actionable next steps.

Demand for talent has never been more competitive and the best candidates today behave more like customers.

The opportunities presented by on-line job boards, social recruiting and professional networking sites such as LinkedIn, have changed the way that talent interacts with the labour market to find work.

Our mission is to provide you with the insight you need to create competitive advantage in this new talent landscape.

The 'Talent Profiling' series is part of Acolyte's suite of intelligence products designed to help HR & Talent Professionals proactively and successfully attract and retain the talent their organisation needs.

Alastair Gorton
Founder & CEO

METHODOLOGY

Acolyte is an award winning talent consultancy and technology company that has been guiding the recruitment profession for over a decade.

Our analysis focuses on the 5 key areas that every candidate instinctively uses to assess potential opportunities - a proven mechanism for successfully interpreting the motivators of talent working in this sector.

Company & Culture

Reward & Recognition

Career & Development

Office & Environment

Responsibilities & Experience

Sharing the perspective of the candidates you wish to recruit provides powerful insight into how talent in the market may perceive your organisation and your opportunities. This is intelligence designed to guide you as you develop your employer value proposition, helping you to communicate and emphasise the things that really make you stand out as an employer.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

According to IBM Research: "Software development refers to a set of computer science activities dedicated to the process of creating, designing, deploying and supporting software."

It involves writing a series of interrelated programming code (known as coding), which provides the functionality of the software.

Software developers are the creative minds behind the programs; in addition to coding, they undertake a variety of tasks including research, design, documentation, testing and debugging and often bring a software project from conception right through to product delivery. They may also be required to maintain, audit and improve systems, as well as diagnosing and resolving system faults.

COMPANY & CULTURE

For software developers, it is all about creating something new and solving problems in a way that has a significant impact either on their company or client. They are creative and innovative and thrive on autonomy and independent thinking. These professionals excel in a team structure where they are surrounded by technical talent, allowing them to exchange knowledge and expertise with colleagues.

Companies that can acknowledge and articulate the important contribution that developers make to the company's journey will succeed in gaining the buy-in of these individuals. Fostering a supportive culture that empowers them to make decisions and encourages independence will have a positive effect on morale. A collaborative ethos that focuses on team-working and knowledge sharing will also ensure these individuals excel in their role.

Company Journey

Demonstrate their contribution towards the overall company purpose

Company Culture

Create a supportive culture that empowers them to make decisions

Team & Peer Group

Create cohesive teams where collaboration and knowledge sharing is customary

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COMPANY JOURNEY

Most Software Developers want to build something new or create something that has an impact. They want to solve real problems and make a difference to the company they work for. Many developers respond well to a sense of purpose and are motivated to work for a company whose product they truly believe in.

Companies that demonstrate an innovative ethos where employees all strive towards a common goal will inspire these professionals. Demonstrating how their work is an important contribution to the company's journey will create buy-in from developers resulting in a motivated and engaged workforce.

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COMPANY CULTURE

Strong Software Developers are creative and innovative - this allows them to think outside of the box and investigate areas that are not usually explored by those who follow specific rules and patterns. They also thrive on autonomy which allows them to push the boundaries of their thinking.

Creating a supportive culture which encourages developers to experiment with coding will bring out the best in these professionals. Empowering them to make their own decisions (without having to call a meeting every time) will have a huge impact on morale and will encourage unconstrained thinking leading to inspired solutions. Companies with a reputation in the market for fostering independence and originality will attract and retain the strongest individuals.

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TEAM & PEER GROUP

The best developers work well in a team and they excel in environments where they are surrounded by technical talent. Strong professionals readily share knowledge with team members and are happy to accept advice and input from their colleagues to reach a better solution. Developers are motivated by working with someone stronger simply because they want to learn from the experiences of other developers they respect.

A culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing is highly attractive to these professionals; ensuring they are working with mentors and colleagues who share their passion and ethos is very important. Companies should encourage all team members to contribute equally and demonstrate their talent to their peers. This will result in mutual respect and high levels of employee engagement.

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CAREER & DEVELOPMENT

Strong developers are excellent problem solvers, who have a natural curiosity and will often seek to enhance their skills outside of work. The rapid advancement in the software industry also means developers know that they need to commit to continuous learning in order to remain an expert in their field. As well as professional training, learning from more experienced team members is often a highly efficient way for them to increase their technical knowledge base

Companies that proactively provide opportunities for the development of personal skills and support professional training requirements will not only benefit from increased innovation, efficiency and productivity but they will also retain a motivated and satisfied workforce. A mentorship model is also an effective approach that enhances this learning and development.

Career Opportunities

Provide opportunities to enhance problem solving skills

Professional Development

Proactively support professional and technical training and development

Access to Management

Foster a mentorship model within the team

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Strong developers are excellent problem solvers who strive to find the best method to meet a challenge. The more knowledge they have, the wider the variety of problems that they can solve. They are naturally curious self-learners who seek to enhance their skills and knowledge by trying out new tools and technologies, comparing them with to those that they use on a regular basis. Many developers further these skills by working on code outside of the office as a hobby.

Employers who demonstrate that they provide opportunities to enhance a developer's problem-solving skills in their day-to-day role will increase motivation and encourage the highest quality of work. Hackathons and similar events that give employees the freedom to work on code outside of their normal work structures may also lead to innovations benefiting both employee and employer.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The software industry is progressing at a rapid pace - new tools, languages and programs are released every day. Great developers know they need to stay up to date with the latest technologies and have a genuine commitment to continuous learning. What they knew a year or two ago might not be enough for them to continue being an expert in their field - there are constantly new updates and getting certified in these is vital to their career. It is also important to note that many developers would prefer to stay technical and continue to be recognised as the expert in their field, rather than going down a management path.

The best candidates are attracted by an employer who is committed to their professional development and understands how this knowledge enhances their skills and capabilities. Having expertise on the programs and the tools that are used to write the code not only allows developers to maximise their productivity, but also increases their job satisfaction. Employers who take the time to understand what each developer wants from their future and provide opportunities to grow within the organisation (whether that is technical progression or moving into management), will be able to attract a much more diverse and skilled population.

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ACCESS TO MANAGEMENT

Learning from a more experienced team member is one of most efficient ways for developers to move up the learning curve and increase their skill and knowledge base. They can benefit greatly from an apprenticeship-style approach of watching a more senior colleague at work.

Fostering a mentorship model within the organisation by pairing more seasoned developers with new talent will facilitate this learning and development. This is not only true for the mentee, but it often encourages the mentor to think about problems in different ways and helps them master their skills further.

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RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPERIENCE

Software developers spend a large proportion of their time coding. They are energised by getting fully involved in the task in hand and many see interruptions such as meetings as a barrier to productivity. Their main motivation comes from the challenge and the reward is overcoming it. They thrive on the ability to 'create' and gain huge satisfaction from knowing that their contribution has made a difference.

Employers must ensure they balance a developer's workload to allow them sufficient coding time to successfully meet delivery, as well avoiding unnecessary meetings and paperwork. Facilitating opportunities for developers to work on original and complex projects will appeal to their passion for challenge and increase job satisfaction. However, employers must ensure they formally appreciate the time and effort put into the project; private rather than public recognition may appeal to their often more introvert nature.

Role & Responsibilities

Balance workload to allow for sufficient coding time

Experience

Facilitate opportunities to work on original and challenging projects

Contribution

Formally recognise their contribution to project delivery

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ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

Software Developers spend a large proportion of their time coding, or more accurately, solving problems and finding out why something isn't working. They are energised by the ability to get fully involved in the task in hand and feel most productive when they have a long, uninterrupted time to focus on this. Many see meetings, client demos and report writing, as a barrier to their productivity and the ability to meet their deadlines successfully.

Establishing realistic deadlines is a significant part of being set up to succeed for these professionals. Employers who recognise this and balance a developer's workload to allow them sufficient coding time to successfully meet their goals, as well avoiding unnecessary meetings and paperwork, will benefit from an engaged and motivated team.

EXPERIENCE

The strongest developers are motivated by challenge - the bigger the challenge, the more interesting it is. Unlike some other professions, there is always a new challenge in software development and a good developer thrives on finding ways to make something work, despite the odds.

The ability to work on 'greenfield' projects is probably the biggest motivator for these professionals. Employers who facilitate opportunities for developers to utilise the latest technologies, learn new skills (preferably ones that everyone's talking about) or tackle new problems will be able to attract and retain the best talent in the field. Companies may have difficulty attracting developers, or keeping them in the business, if the work assigned is too easy or mundane.

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CONTRIBUTION

Strong developers will take great pride in their work. For most, the ability to 'create' will be the most attractive part of the job and they will gain immense satisfaction from the program they have designed running successfully. They will relish being recognised for their contribution to solving a problem - especially when it has been for an outstanding piece of creative code.

Developers will often have worked tirelessly to deliver a project on time and and employers must be sure to formally acknowledge their efforts and abilities. This can, in fact, have a greater impact on morale and motivation than a tangible reward, such as a pay raise or time off. However, it is important to note that private rather than public recognition may appeal to their often more introvert nature.

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OFFICE & ENVIRONMENT

Developers can work from anywhere and often happily do so outside of office hours, determined to solve the problem they are working on. However, the right technology is essential and collaboration with colleagues increases the chance of successful delivery. Careers for developers exist across the world, and these individuals form part of a global network who interact regularly to exchange ideas.

A culture that supports a flexible approach to working location and hours is attractive to these professionals; it demonstrates trust and respect and that their value is based on the quality of output. It is crucial to provide them with efficient, cutting-edge equipment and appropriate meeting spaces that facilitate collaboration. Companies that champion global connectivity will also be appealing to the mindset of a developer.

Location

Establish a flexible approach to working hours and location

Premises & Facilities

Provide cutting-edge technology and appropriate meeting spaces

Opportunities to Travel

Support global connectivity

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LOCATION

Most developers have a passion for their work and, if they can do it from anywhere, they will often happily work outside of office hours - not because they have to, but because they want to. The stereotypical software developer is burning the midnight oil, determined to solve the problem they're working on.

A culture that enables a work-from-anywhere approach, along with a flexible working schedule, will demonstrate that an employee's value is not based on whether or not they are physically present in the office at certain times but on the quality of their work. This demonstration of trust and respect is highly valued by developers and will result in loyal and driven employees.

PREMISES & FACILITIES

For developers, the right tools are crucial. They become frustrated and demotivated when forced to use outdated technology, as this impedes the quality and efficiency of their work. Collaboration with team members is also key to successful delivery of a project.

Since developers always need maximum horsepower, pushing hard drives and CPUs to the limits, it is essential to provide them with the most up-to-date technology, along with several screens, smartphones and tablets for testing. Providing a meeting space or breakout area with cosy sofas where developers can relax, and exchange ideas will further demonstrate an understanding of their needs.

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OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAVEL

Like many careers in technology, the work of a software developer has no geographical boundaries. These professionals can, and do, work anywhere in the world. They may not exhibit a desire to be re-located, however, this is a community that is used to communicating and exchanging knowledge and ideas virtually within a global network.

Developers enjoy the ability to interact with people from other cultures in other countries who all use the same language: technology. Companies who support this interaction and that can demonstrate a global outlook will be attractive to these individuals.

REWARD & RECOGNITION

Developers thrive on being given challenging problems to solve, as opposed to being spoon-fed tasks to complete – and this enables them to be invested in finding a solution. Tight client deadlines mean that long hours are common, which can often impact their work/life balance. However, they are aware they command a high salary, and this is seen as an advantage of the role for many.

Employers must avoid micro-managing these professionals and instead encourage independent thinking to give a sense of ownership. They should also ensure realistic deadlines are set to allow for a good work/life balance, which will encourage the retention of this talent pool. To ensure they remain competitive in the marketplace, companies must pay enough that salary is not an issue.

Atmosphere

Encourage independent thinking to instill a sense of ownership

Life Outside of Work

Establish realistic deadlines to allow for a good work/life balance

Reward & Remuneration

Pay enough that salary is not an issue

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ATMOSPHERE

Developers are highly intelligent and inquisitive, and generally don't like to be spoon-fed individual tasks to accomplish. Giving them a problem and challenging them to solve it makes for much more inspiring work; it engages higher levels of thinking and enables them to become invested in finding a solution.

Excellent management, both in terms of the project and the people, is a must-have motivation factor - the goal should not be to oversee individual tasks and work practices but instead to encourage lateral and independent thinking. This will instill a sense of ownership for the work they are doing, creating drive and enthusiasm.
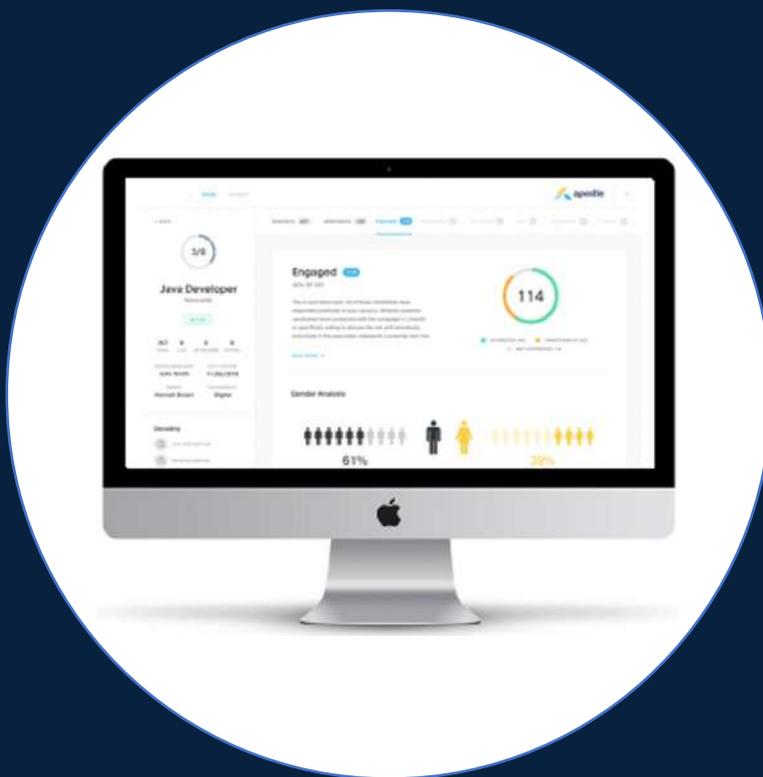
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LIFE OUTSIDE OF WORK

Long hours, a poor work/life balance and burnout are commonly reported downsides of the role of a developer, and many now see this as an issue. Working almost all day (and sometimes all night) in front of a computer to meet tight deadlines means that many have to sacrifice their personal and social lives. It also has an impact on the health and well-being of these employees.

In order to successfully retain talented individuals, companies must ensure they value the work/life balance of their developers. Often, this means effective project management to ensure realistic deadlines and involving the developers in the planning stages of the process can be hugely advantageous. Employees may also benefit from ergonomically designed workstations and a culture that promotes short, regular breaks away from the desk.

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REWARD & REMUNERATION

The increasing demand for developers means they command high salaries; developers are aware of this and it is a well-known advantage of the job. Many will look for a new job for the chance to earn better compensation. In addition, the fact that there is always something new to learn also adds up to the pay scale of these professionals.

Employers must ensure they pay enough that salary isn't an issue. However, addressing the motivators for seeking another role will also ensure they have the competitive edge; the ability to work with new technologies, access to challenges that permit creative freedom and a good work-life balance are all high on the wish list of a developer.

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THE ACOLYTE TALENT PLATFORM

FIND

Choose from the best PASSIVE and ACTIVE talent. Search functionality that gives your team direct access to every candidate at every level in any sector or geography.

RETAIN

Immediately access key information that will maximise retention in your workforce. Including: Diversity & Inclusivity, Salary Benchmarking, Talent Hotspots, Competitor Activity & Candidate Sentiment Analysis.

HIRE

Campaign management that identifies, screens, qualifies & introduces you to exactly the right people. Improving hiring success and adding powerful diagnostic capabilities for every recruitment campaign.

GROW

Also benefit from access to Acolyte's suite of talent intelligence services which provide the customised, data driven analysis you need to inform strategic thinking and drive growth.

HIRE TALENT DIRECTLY

Acolyte's mission is simple:

To create a platform that offers employers the insight and recruitment solutions they need for direct, scalable and cost-effective access to the high-quality talent required to meet their business objectives.

We harness data, AI and the latest technology to energise hiring in your business and empower your in-house recruitment and HR teams to deliver direct hire strategies.

Success

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"Professional, quick to deliver results & cost effective, In a trial between contingent agencies alongside Acolyte and the best and successful candidates always came via the Acolyte Platform"