



Parity[®]

A GUIDE TO HIRING

TECH TALENT



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What a strange few years. The pandemic has irreversibly altered the way we can and want to work. Professional and personal priorities have been redefined; virtually unknown tech solutions have enabled us to work - and enjoy working - anywhere, and roles that weren't so essential / didn't exist before have now become critical (i.e. **director of remote work** and cyber-calamity forecaster). Barely anything from pre-2020 working remains untouched, causing serious headaches for businesses across the globe.

According to **Edelman**, there has been a significant shift in what people want from an employer, which in part explains the reason for declining staff retention. Where businesses can't meet those needs, people are moving on. With all that talent flooding the market, it should be simple to fill those vacancies, yes? Sadly not. The proverbial ball is very much in the candidates' courts, particularly in tech disciplines. They are understandably picking and choosing; searching for companies which offer what they're searching for.

Taking your tech talent hiring strategy to that next level now means adopting a holistic approach: examining the recruitment process from the very beginning of the candidate's journey and understanding what they want. Using information to your advantage to identify the right people and creating adverts which appeal to them. Positioning the company as one the candidate would feel proud to work for and throughout providing an engaging, positive and easy experience, supported by the right partners.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our guide lists five main tips which are pertinent for hiring tech talent today, in a 'post'-pandemic working world. The first relates to the importance of obtaining as much niche market insight as you can, information which reveals who and where your talent pool is; information that your competition may not have access to. Second, using data to identify talent expectations and to create a package which means that you become a serious contender and can attract talent from any location. Third, we discuss the importance of wording your job adverts and job descriptions in a way that engages and meets talents' values, and reviewing and revitalising your application process to mitigate drop-off. A much-underutilised resource is your own people, and tip number four talks about using employee advocates to reach untapped tech talent. Lastly, it's important not to get onboard with just any recruiter, but the right recruiter, one with innovative solutions to meet your individual requirements.

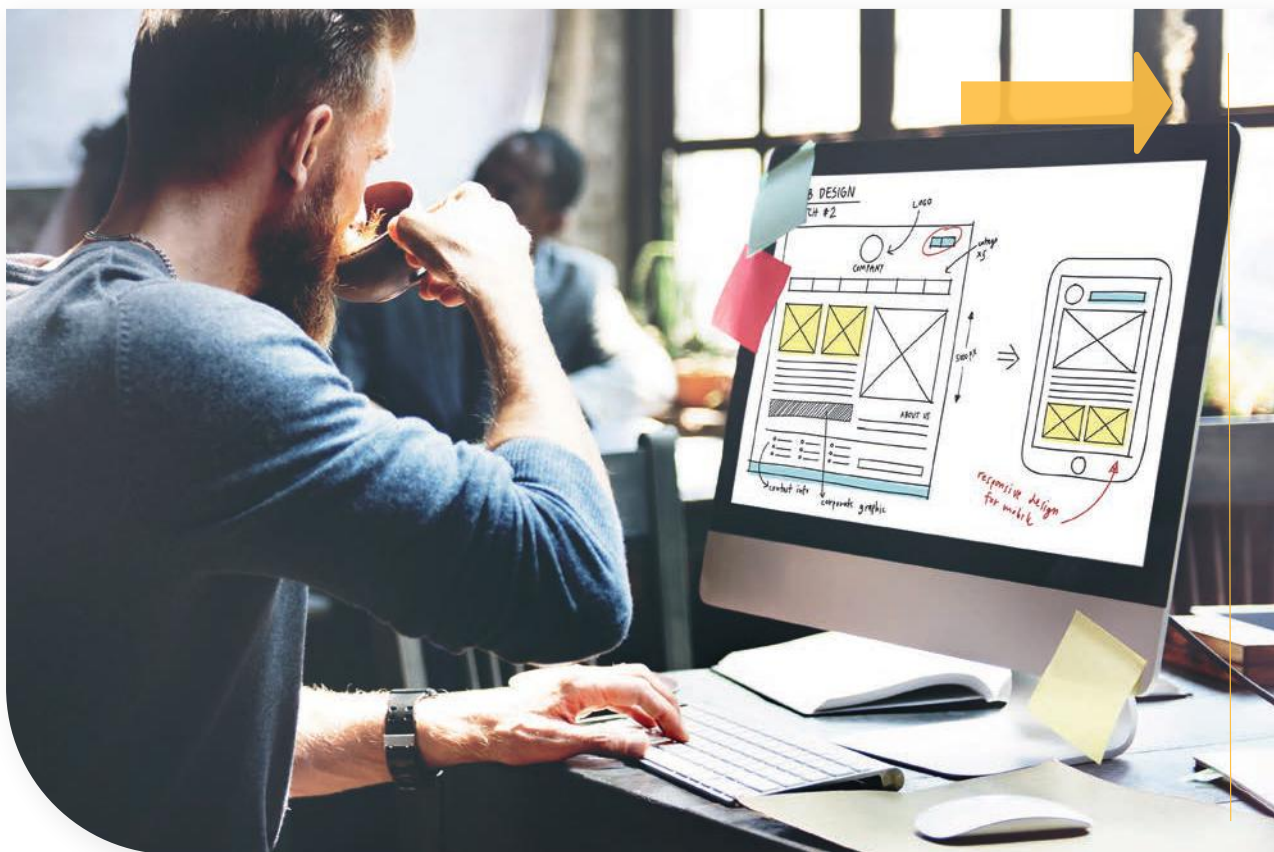
Improving your hiring processes will transform the task, not only for candidates, but for your acquisition teams and hiring managers, too. **Contact us for further details** or to discover how we can help you with your hiring strategies.



THE GUIDE

1. Get as much niche market insight as you can and use it to your (competitive) advantage

The March 2022 **ONS Labour Market Overview** shows that vacancies in the past quarter grew to a record 1.3 million. Specifically, within the professional scientific and technical activities sector, vacancies grew by 9.7% in December - March (11,500 roles) and by a huge 79.5% compared with the same time last year. Yet candidate availability continues to **fall sharply**, as job-seekers have their pick of the roles. In fact, as we have **reported previously**, research claims that the shortfall in skilled labour equates to ten unfilled roles per business, on average. This may sound all doom-and-gloom for hiring managers, but gaining insight into specific tech niches reveals that the picture is actually somewhat brighter. When drilling down, data - gleaned from dozens of online tools and services (**ask us for details**) - shows that there are masses of candidates right across the tech spectrum; even more so if you consider transferable skills instead of specific experience.



Take a front-end developer, for example. We found 1,500 vacancies listed and a talent pool numbering 12,800 people - which implies there's much more opportunity than the labour market overview suggests. For intelligence analysts, there are 2,500 candidates browsing just 200 live vacancies. And though there are 12,000 business analyst job adverts online right now, the applicant pool totals around 45,000. Essentially, data shows there are tech talent pools out there.

Don't worry if your application rate doesn't yet suggest that's the case, as data can provide other talent pool insights which can help in understanding what potential applicants are looking for. Discover where talent is located and what salaries are expected. Find out which companies they worked at and which businesses are your biggest competition - talent and product-wise. Learn about cultural values and what attracts, engages and retains talent - useful for headhunting senior or hard-to-find skilled people. There's also data out there which tells you about experience levels, so you can gauge appetite for various job levels (see what we discovered about **solutions architects** candidates, and where demand is).

Hopeful, yes? Data insight can equip you with the knowledge to better target your recruitment activities, become competitive and attract high calibre applications. So get your hands on everything that you can.

Ask us about our talent insights. ➡

2. Create an offering in line with talents' expectations

Insights can help you shape a role, remuneration and an overall package, so that it aligns with candidates' expectations, and is - at the very least - commensurate with what the competition is offering.

The latest report from the **Recruitment and Employment Confederation** states that the current candidate shortage has driven up starting pay by the 'second-fastest rate in over 24 years of data collection', so determining whether your offering matches up is vital if you want talent to take notice.

A quick check on Indeed reveals that many of the jobs which have been posted 30+ days ago are ones where the salary doesn't correlate with the data. For instance, an experienced UX Designer can expect up to £76k per annum according to our data, yet several unfilled remote-based (to remove geographical variations) roles advertise salary ranges which are far lower (one even starting at a way-off-the-mark £38k p.a.) or worse, don't include a salary at all. It's not only about money, of course. Work location and hours have become more highly valued than ever, and flexibility is key - which means looking beyond merely hybrid working.

Though **Microsoft data** finds that 84% of hybrid-working Brits claim they're as/more productive than ever (and employers report few negative impacts), 51% are considering '**going fully remote**' in the next year - suggesting that the hybrid option isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. For employers with hard-to-fill vacancies, it deceptively limits your talent pool, compared with remote and fully flexible options, which cast the net wide to the entire country and beyond. Case in point, our research shows that though front-end developers may be mostly situated in London and the South East (half the pool), a proportion is based in the North East and North West, so offering fully remote working options could attract greater and more diverse applications from further afield.

Many companies have **recently announced remote working** options, finding that commuting long hours and restricting employees to living in/near expensive cities impacts recruitment. LinkedIn confirms this shift, with numerous businesses emphasising remote working, some even placing it in the title to better grab attention.

As Airbnb co-founder Brian Chesky says:

“Companies will be at a significant disadvantage if they limit their talent pool to a commuting radius around their offices. The best people live everywhere.”

3. Invest in your advert wording and application process

There's a well-trodden-out statistic which claims women won't apply for a role unless they meet 100% of requirements, whereas men are happy if they can tick off 60%. Although this is **largely disregarded** now, it's been discovered that women are more likely to follow hiring guidelines and bypass a role if they aren't following the rules, or think they'll fail.

It would be lazy to claim that most tech roles are undertaken by male talent, but it's certain that the language used in many tech job adverts can be interpreted as male, and off-putting to female applicants, which might in some small way account for any gender imbalances. Reviewing the wording of your job adverts and job descriptions is one way to redress the situation and open up your talent pool, without applicants feeling the need to alter their own language (research has found that when applying for IT roles, **women downplay their femininity**).

Words such as 'analyse' and 'lead' are typically regarded as male, while 'support' and 'understanding' are female-coded. Achieving gender neutral language is possible using a range of online tools, like Textio, or by consulting a recruitment expert, transforming a job ad into one which appeals to a much larger proportion of the talent pool.

Remember that your advert also serves as a shop window for your company and is a prime opportunity to boast about company culture (especially as during the so-called 'Great Resignation', large numbers **left their employer** due to the way they were treated during / after the pandemic). Use quotes from positive employee reviews (see employee advocacy below) to demonstrate how highly you regard your people, and include information on life event and affirmative action policies. Adding an **equality statement** can improve vacancy fill rate times by a not insignificant 6%. Describing your corporate social responsibility programme and **'ethical drivers'** (social impact, green policies, trust, etc) can elevate your advert further. People want to be a part of a company which behaves ethically towards its people, its customers and the community, so highlight what yours is doing.

Writing the best job advert ever won't help you if the application process is lengthy, complicated or perceived as open to prejudice. Many applicants drop out at this point, when asked to type out their CV, for example, or provide personal information which could impact impartiality, however unconscious. Studies show that most people will apply right there and then if the process appears quick and simple, such as a one-click option (usually via a job board) or by simply making it more interesting, i.e. through gamification. Almost **half of smartphone users** (both men and women) play games on their device daily, so creating an app could be a smart way to capture more talent, especially for tech roles. Think about coding tests, hacker challenges or just a problem to solve. The beauty is that anyone with access to a device can apply - any age, any background.

Being clear on the next steps, either via personal interaction, by regular, automated messages or through candidate-specific content, is additionally a preference and may reduce **candidate ghosting** - where applicants suddenly stop all communication with a company - which is said to affect 37% of recruitment teams and really slow down time-to-hire.

This stage of the candidate journey - often the first point of contact - is your chance to really grab attention, so it's well worth investing some time into getting it right.

Ask us for job advert advice →



4. Use employee advocates to reach untapped tech talent

LinkedIn claims that most people are **three times more likely** to trust information supplied by a company employee than from the company itself, so if you're sharing vacancies on social media, it's always, always, always beneficial to ask your people to reshare. Aside from being genuine, living proof that your company is good to work for, they usually have up to ten times more followers who don't (yet) follow the company's social platforms. These are just a couple of positive impacts brought about via employee advocacy.

Word of mouth plays a huge part in persuasion, be it an online review or a glowing report of a business. In fact, **84% of people** reportedly believe in products recommended by friends or family, and brand messages are amplified substantially when shared by employees - reaching 24 times more people than the company's own effort.

Creating an employee advocacy programme effectively gets your word out to potential applicants you might not have reached ordinarily. It usually comprises a group of social media-savvy employees who are happy to share, comment, write posts and promote the business across all platforms (**younger job-seekers** tend towards Instagram rather than LinkedIn for company insight). Reportedly, 81% of millennials share information about their employer regardless, so identifying participants shouldn't be too difficult. Better still, form a specific group from among your technical staff, to ensure that the shared information is relevant to tech talent. This approach, which also improves brand awareness, is crucial at a time when **93% of job hunters** feel it's important to be well-informed about a company before applying for a job, and over half will disregard those with negative reviews - which brings us to another essential tool in your hiring armoury: staff reviews. Ask your employee advocates to leave their own feedback on a platform such as Glassdoor, and then share it.

Employee advocates are a huge mine of untapped potential who can bring about significant benefits for brand awareness, company reputation and in improving hiring success.

5. Partner with the right recruiter

We've all been job-hunters at some time or another, and we can probably all agree that generally, it's a hard-going, arduous experience. Spending ages on a CV and cover letter, only to receive not so much as an automated acknowledgment is more than discouraging - plus it sends off-putting, negative signals about the hiring business.

We also know that recruitment itself, from an internal perspective, is time-consuming, challenging and onerous. It often gets left on the back-burner or delegated, and as a result, vacancies remain unfilled or worse, the wrong person is appointed. To use a cliché, it's a minefield; not to mention the numerous rules you must abide by. It's difficult to know which way to turn sometimes, but you should always want your applicants to receive a positive experience. That's why so many businesses employ the assistance of a specialist recruitment agency: to reduce time-to-hire, improve vacancy:application ratios and to ensure the process is done correctly.

(Here comes the 'but') But, not all recruitment agencies are made equal, and effective tech hiring strategies depend on choosing the right - not just any - tech recruitment partner. One which understands your individual needs, your company culture and how to get your brand message out there in your advertising. One which applies market insights (like those we mentioned above) to initiate strong tech applications. One which works hard to nurture strong relationships with clients and candidates, in the firm belief that the human side of data leads to the right people doing the right roles.

In addition to working small projects and single roles, that partner might offer an approach known as embedded recruitment. Though the degree of agency involvement differs depending on individual requirements, a typical embedded recruitment scenario for numerous vacancies sees a dedicated account manager (on site or remote), working as an extension of your own team, with responsibility for the data insight collection, job adverts, advertising, screening and related interview admin. This brings universal benefits: more efficient hiring and removing any burden from your own staff.

This approach guides the candidate on a seamless, smooth journey from initial touchpoints on job boards, through to offer stage - via bespoke careers landing pages, quick shortlisting and interview, with regular/automated communication. All of which is facilitated by an account manager that represents your employer brand in an honest way, in order to build and manage your talent pools for future need.

It's not easy attracting tech talent. The world of work has changed and employers must find ways to embrace this change, or run the risk of being left behind with dozens of unfilled vacancies. With the help of a trusted niche recruitment partner, plus the tips above, you can implement a hiring strategy that does just that; aligning with expectations and positioning you as an employer of choice in this very new, very candidate-driven environment.

For further information or to discuss your tech recruitment requirements, **please contact us**

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