

Recruiting Engineers?

Outsmart These 3 Recruiting Process Pitfalls

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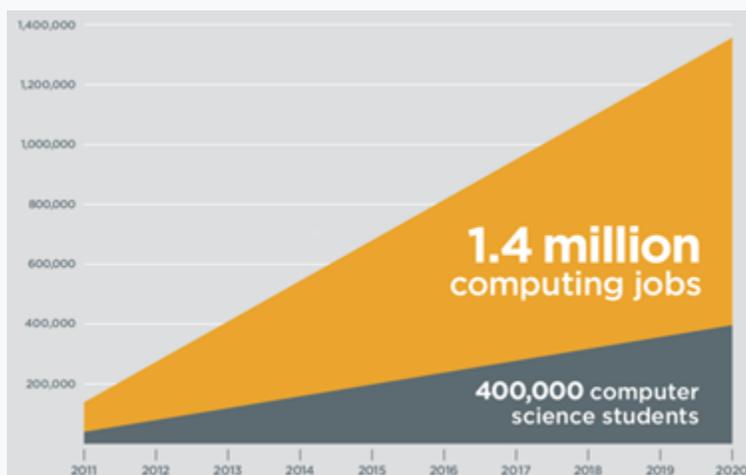
Introduction

As a tech recruiter, the thing that you love most about your job is also your biggest challenge: finding that 'one in a million' engineering candidate to complement your team. When you find that perfect engineering candidate, the trajectory of the entire product, team and company is changed forever. Each strong hire has the potential to change the lives of millions through the software he or she builds. Long story short, there are good moments and there are less-than-good moments—all because of the same reason.

It goes without saying that tech roles are some of the hardest to fill. For one, top candidates are happily employed: they're hard to find because they're not looking for jobs. Not to mention, workers have more options than ever before. Competitive, fast-moving tech hubs are springing up around the country and world—yes, we're looking at you Seattle, Austin, Kansas City, Provo, and Bangalore. Tech roles require very specific skills: a programmer who self-identifies as a Ruby on Rails developer, for instance, may not be the .NET or PHP mastermind who your team needs.

These three market dynamics are creating a hiring squeeze in an already-competitive candidate-driven market . As one (frightening) stat from Gartner points out:

"By 2020, there will be 1.4 million computer specialist job openings, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. But projections show universities are not likely to produce enough qualified graduates to fill even about 30% of these jobs."



PSEA.org

But this stat is just as mis-leading as it is frightening: the best engineers aren't necessarily CS grads. They come from all walks of life and backgrounds from social science to psychology and yes, even the humanities. 59.8% of those with programmer, or computer scientist titles in one study not carry a CS degree.

The tech talent shortage isn't actually real--it's a perception that results from companies recruiting from the wrong sources. This perceived tech shortage can be overcome. Here's how:



'Widening' the funnel



Doing more legwork to screen candidates



Referral programs that give away cash or prizes

Manually widening the funnel, doing more legwork in screening, and more referral programs may be well-intentioned. But they're creating these hidden inefficiencies:



When you widen your sourcing funnel you'll encounter more candidates who aren't a good fit. You'll waste more time reading mismatched resumes than building key relationships with talented engineers.



When you take on more of the legwork to screen and interview candidates, you may miss key details that only an experienced developer would know. Your specialty is in matching people to organizations and teams—not writing code.



Referral programs, while great for increasing applicant volume, aren't always efficient: a 'free iPad giveaway' or '\$10K referral bonus' may not create the right incentives for sourcing the right candidates to your organization. You want to hire people who understand, care about, and empathize with your company as much as you do.

At first glance, it seems like the best way to tackle these challenges is to do more of the same: find more candidates, read more resumes, and pour more incentives into peer-driven hiring programs. But soon enough, you'll feel like you're chasing your tail and experience burnout as a result.

Tech recruiters need to hit the reset button and work smarter, not harder. Think like the smartest programmers that you've met and hired: the first step is to identify your biggest time sinks and areas of inefficiency. Then, build processes to tackle these challenges head-on. Here's how to outsmart the biggest tech screening mistakes.

1. The Resume Pitfall

Resumes fall short in telling human stories

Imagine that you're seeking out a caregiver for your child, new friend, or fitness coach. Think back to the time that you selected the college you attended or your rationale for choosing your college major. Now, envision that you're using the equivalent of a resume to help navigate one of these life decisions.

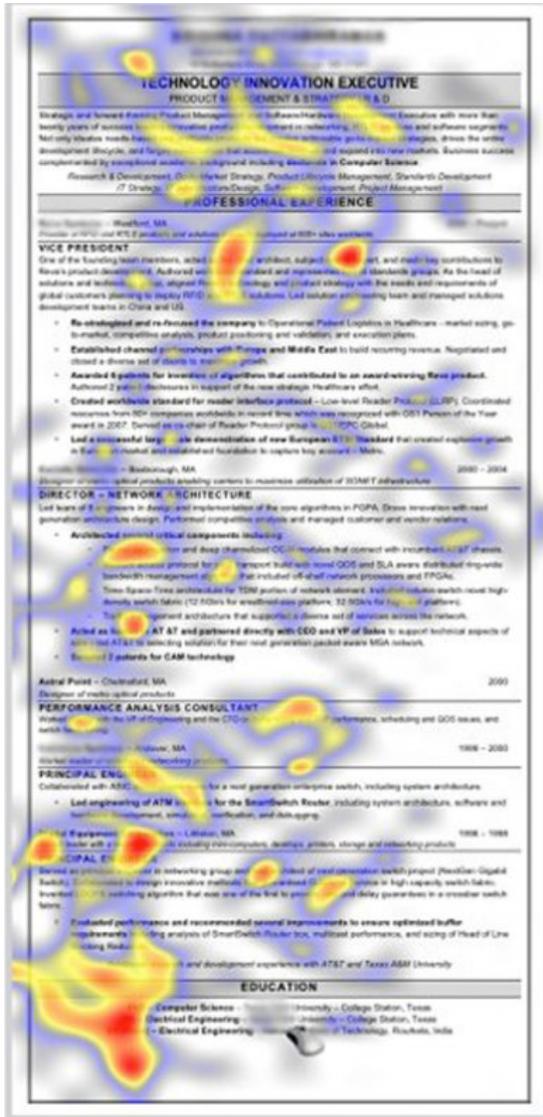
The thought probably seems absurd. When you're making a major life decision, you need to do your due diligence and research. Otherwise, you could end up unhappy with the choice you've made—or worse, you could end up taking a major wrong turn in life.

Why should tech recruiting be different? You need to carefully evaluate every hire that you bring on, as these individuals contribute to your company's financial future. Engineering hires, especially, will be critical to your operations in helping you build a stronger organization (they're responsible for maintaining uptime, making sure that you can execute initiatives successfully, and keeping critical systems running). Bring on the right team member, and your company will shine. But if you hire the wrong person? You risk steering your business in a very wrong direction.

Contrast this perspective with the stat that recruiters spend only 6 seconds reviewing candidate resumes.

6
seconds

**time recruiters
spend on
each resume**



Eye Tracking Recruiters, *Business Insider*.

Back in 2012, recruiting website The Ladders ran an eye-tracking study and found the following:

“In the short time that they spend on your resume, recruiters look at your name, current title and company, current position start and end dates, previous title and company, previous position start and end dates, and education,” Business Insider reports.

There was a clear relationship between information absorption and formatting. Well-designed resumes attracted more attention than cluttered ones. The consensus of the study? It was for candidates to avoid large blocks of text and to list experiences in chronological order.

If only life fit into such neatly packaged boxes for human beings.

Top engineers aren't designers--they're expert coders. Their core competencies aren't in formatting resumes to look good (let's be real, nobody is really equipped with that skillset, and it's not a noteworthy accomplishment either).

If you're spending 6 seconds reviewing thousands of resumes, you're likely missing key details (and going stir-crazy from scanning so much text). If you're engineers aren't able to share their full stories, they may drop interesting details or bullet points—and you'd never know the difference.

In the short time that they spend on your resume, recruiters look at your name, current title and company, current position start and end dates, previous title and company, previous position start and end dates, and education.

Business Insider

When it comes to screening engineers, resumes are manual, inaccurate time sucks. Recruiters are instantly drawn towards the one-pagers that look better, which means that there's an instant bias towards engineers who can also do design.

What about the engineers who are exceptional at coding but terrible at design?

There needs to be a better way to build an empathetic, human connection—to reach potential candidates based on enthusiasm, drive, and skill rather than a list of accomplishments, credentials, and job titles.

What to do Instead

Ditch the resume and host an online hackathon, or CodeSprint, instead. HackerRank has developed online hackathons, in which candidates solve coding challenges in 24-hour timeframes. At the end of the event, companies that partner with HackerRank on the CodeSprint get a list of the top performing candidates.

For instance, one recent CodeSprint featured 11 challenges, ranging in difficulty and discipline. It appealed to programmers who are interested in algorithms, artificial intelligence and machine learning challenges, functional programming and general programming.

Zenefits hired **10** engineers in **10** days with just **1** CodeSprint

It's the antithesis to the resume. You can attract programmers, from all of the world, based on an interesting, complex challenge. Then, you can get to know each of these programmers by looking up their solutions and performance. Rather than relying on a resume to function as a one-page brochure, top engineers can let their skills speak for themselves. You can quantify skills automatically.

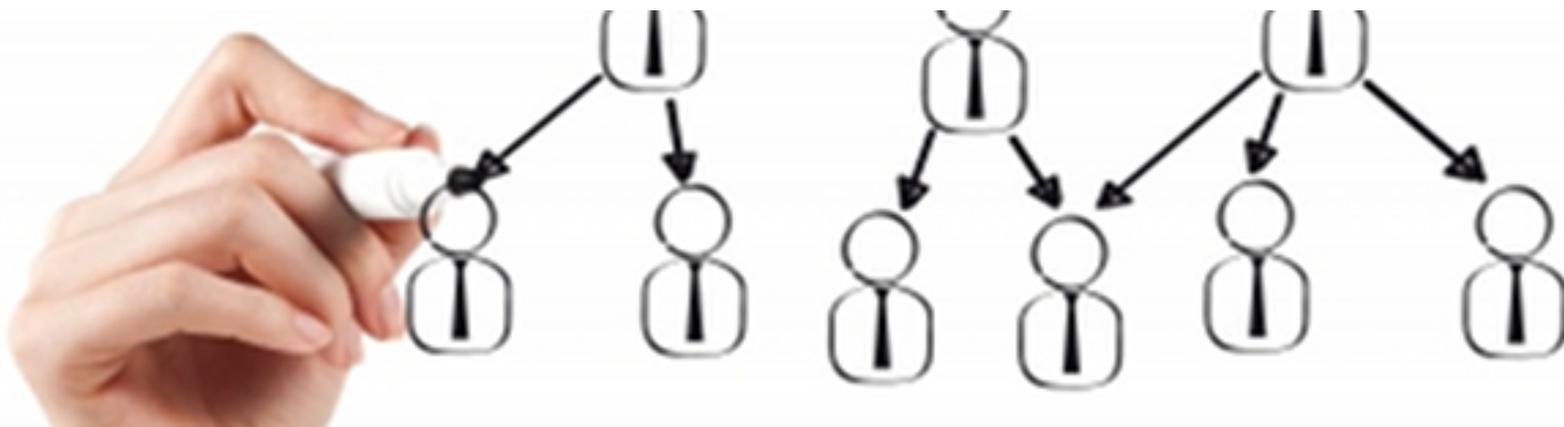
The value to recruiters is immense. Rather than relying on resume-guesswork, tech sourcers can be confident that their candidates' skills are vetted--spending more time on assessing culture fit, instead.

“ Our offer ratio has gone up to 70% from onsites since implementing HackerRank ”

Michelle Delcambre, Senior Engineering Recruiter at Zenefits

2. The Whiteboard Interview Pitfall

They're awkward and inefficient



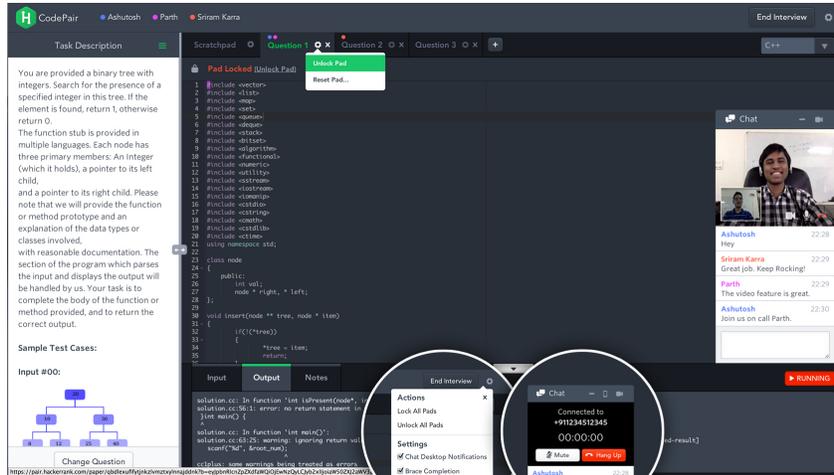
When you're hiring engineers, you need to do more than test coding skills from afar. You need to assess team fit, communication skills, and problem-solving capabilities.

That's why engineering teams have been using whiteboard interviews for the past few decades. Here's how it all looks:

1. Software engineers who make it to the whiteboard interview have a few hours to showcase how quickly, concisely, and clearly they can code.
2. Hiring managers give software engineers a coding challenge like "sort an array of 100 integers." Candidates need to stand up, turn to a vertical blank slate, and handwrite code (what?) from scratch while a handful of senior engineers scrutinize their every word and move.

Not to mention, whiteboard interviews create major inefficiencies. You need to fly engineers out to your office to make them happen, and you need to take your engineering team away from deadlines and everyday responsibilities. And for what? These meetings are clunky, awkward, and fail to bring out the best in people.

What to do Instead



CodePair lets engineering managers see candidates' code in real-time from anywhere in the world.

Use CodePair instead. You'll love this tool, and here's why: it essentially replaces the phone screen and whiteboard interview. Hiring teams can just watch candidates code on their own equipment, wherever everyone on the call is comfortable. It's possible to have a discussion and talk through solutions --just like a whiteboard interview, minus the clunkiness and expensive travel fees.

The end result? You improve interviewing efficiencies dramatically. You meet more candidates. You create a better experience for all parties involved and are able to source better talent as a result. You become a better company.

VMware's Reported Results

100%

More candidates interviewed

75%

Phone screening time reduced

2,250

Hours saved

The results will be very, very real. You'll feel them. Consider the case of VMWare as an example: the tech leader, with CodePair technology, has been able to interview 100% more candidates while cutting down phone screen time by 75%. A total of 2,250 hours have been saved for every 10-15 hires. You'll meet more awesome people and make your engineering team even more amazing.

3. The Tech Sourcer Pitfall

Recruiters are connectors - not coders

Engineers don't have time to conduct interviews all day: every hour spent meeting with candidates is time taken away from coding and building products. If your teams aren't careful, they may fall behind or face significant opportunity costs.

Tech sourcers, as a result, may feel obligated to pick up the slack. They're aggressive go-getters who seek to overcome friction and find that diamond-in-the rough. But there's only so much they can do because they're focused on finding and connecting people—not writing code. They're dealing with the following points of friction as a result:



False positives



Miscommunication
with hiring managers



Wasted time as a result

As a tech recruiter, you're likely well-versed in important engineering concepts. But you're not hands-on in the day-to-day. Your time is best spent in building your candidate pipeline and introducing top talent into your company's sourcing funnel. You need to venture out in the community to build your workforce.

What to do Instead

There are actually a couple things that you can do.

First, you need to automate key processes to make your entire recruiting operation as possible. Code Challenges and CodeSprints can help. By embedding a code challenge on your careers page, you can accurately gauge the skill level of your candidate before the in-person interviews. You can also integrate code challenges with your ATS system. With CodeSprints, you can pre-screen a high volume of candidates to validate their skills ahead of time.

Second, the whole process is easy, and hiring managers can have direct input through very automated processes. Engineers can create challenges or choose challenges from HackerRank's libraries. Candidates can complete exercises on their own time. Recruiters get a list of candidates with their code challenge scores.

What happens next? Recruiters can focus on establishing culture fit. Engineers end up with team members who are not only expert coders: they're awesome colleagues, too.

And that's the most important part.

About HackerRank

HackerRank is a platform that ranks engineers by coding skills and helps companies discover talent and save time to hire. We're driving a new paradigm shift by eliminating resumes and creating opportunities for hundreds of thousands of programmers worldwide. Over 1,000 companies use HackerRank to build strong engineering teams.