Talent Acquisition for the Digital Economy

ICTC CTIC

Employer Toolkit
Hire, Engage and Retain Digital Employees

Acknowledgement

The toolkit was developed by ICTC in consultation with Cheryl Hooper, Career & HR Consultant, BWH Information Solutions.

TADE

Talent Acquisition for the Digital Economy (TADE) is a capacity building program supporting small and medium sized Alberta companies to attract, hire, and retain digital talent, strengthening their competitive advantage nationally and internationally. As part of the TADE program, this toolkit provides practical tools and processes for recruiting, hiring, and engaging digital employees.

The Information and Communications Technology Council

The Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) is a not-for-profit national centre of expertise for strengthening Canada's digital advantage in a global economy. Through trusted research, practical policy advice, and creative capacity building programs, ICTC fosters globally competitive Canadian industries enabled by innovative and diverse digital talents. In partnership with an expansive network of industry leaders, academic partners, and policy makers across Canada, ICTC has empowered a robust and inclusive digital economy for over 25 years.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this resource was created based on current (2021) resources and identifies challenges to attracting and retaining digital talent. This material is meant to provide small and medium sized businesses easy-to-use information to improve HR management practices. It was created to assist a wide range of organizations and industries.

These materials introduce useful and straightforward HR management concepts and practices and are not intended to serve as solutions to complex issues. This document does not provide legal advice. In the case of a complex HR issue, you should consult with an HR professional who has the appropriate qualifications, or a lawyer.

Reasonable efforts have also been made to ensure that the information provided here is accurate, but this does not guarantee its accuracy. References and links to other resources and websites do not imply any endorsement of these resources. Under no circumstances will ICTC or any other contributor to this content, linked resources, or templates be held liable.

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Introduction

Alberta's digital workforce (comprised of tech workers across non-tech sectors and those working for any one of Alberta's 3,000 tech companies[1]) is growing. Overall digital employment increased by 45,000 between 2010 and 2020, and demand is forecasted to remain strong, reaching a total Alberta workforce of 203,000 by 2025.[2]

With the influx of tech companies and partnerships to Alberta, the demand for Alberta digital talent is strong. In Spring 2021 alone, tech giant Infosys announced it would bring 500 jobs to a new office in Calgary[3]; Mphasis revealed plans to open a Canadian headquarters, a quantum computing hub, and create 1,000 jobs in a strategic partnership with the University of Calgary and the Government of Alberta[4]; while RBC said it will create 300 tech jobs in a new Calgary-based innovation hub.[5]

The COVID-19 global pandemic brought economic uncertainty, but it did not adversely impact digital employment as much as it did other types of work. In fact, in Alberta, demand for digital workers increased in 2020, while other sectors contracted. The Alberta unemployment rate among digital workers currently sits at just 1.5%.[6]

Not only did strong demand for tech workers continue through the COVID crisis, the necessary adjustments Canadians made in their daily lives presented opportunities for the digital economy. The transition to working and spending more time at home increased demand for digital goods and services and created trends that will persist into the future. Research also shows that digitally savvy organizations were more insulated from the impacts of the economic slowdown. Brick-and-mortar operations that were able to pivot to an online focus and employers who were able to accommodate a remote workforce experienced a quicker recovery—in many cases exceeding their pre-pandemic output levels.[7]

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[1] Stephenson, A., "Alberta now home to 3,000 tech companies; new report shows an industry hitting its stride", Calgary Herald, April 28, 2021, https://calgaryherald.com/business/local-business/alberta-now-home-to-3000-tech-companies-new-report-shows-an-industry-hitting-its-stride.

[2] Ivus, M., Kotak, A., "Onwards and Upwards - Digital Talent Outlook 2025", Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), August 2021, https://www.ictc-ctic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/digital-talent-outlook-for-2025.pdf.

[3] CBC News, "Tech giant Infosys plans to create 500 jobs in Calgary expansion", March 3, 2021, cbc.ca, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/jobs-calgary-tech-firm-infosys-expand-1.5935186

[4] Stephenson, A., "Global IT giant to partner with U of C on quantum computing centre", Calgary Herald, June 2, 2021, https://calgaryherald.com/business/local-business/global-it-giant-to-partner-with-u-of-c-on-quantum-computing-centre.

[5] Gervais, B., "Global IT giant to partner with U of C on quantum computing centre", Calgary Herald, June 2, 2021, https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/rbc-bringing-300-tech-jobs-to-new-calgary-innovation-hub.

[6] eTalent Canada by ICTC, Alberta Employment Data, ICTC, August 2021, https://www.etalentcanada.ca/employment-data/alberta/.

[7] Ivus, M., Kotak, A., "Onwards and Upwards - Digital Talent Outlook 2025", Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), August 2021, https://www.ictc-ctic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/digital-talent-outlook-for-2025.pdf.

Given the growth of Alberta's tech sector and the ever-increasing digitization of businesses in general, healthy competition for top digital talent is anticipated in the near term among Alberta's small and medium sized employers. This toolkit was designed with this in mind and will guide Alberta employers through real-world considerations in recruiting talent, onboarding new employees, and keeping employees engaged.

The business case for successful hiring, onboarding, and retention is clear: all these activities cost time and money. A well-planned onboarding strategy, for example, provides far more than a good first impression and a smooth start for a new employee; it sets them up for productivity. Research shows a structured onboarding experience can improve a new hire's engagement in the organization, and also improves employee retention.[8] Retention is a good investment, given the cost of replacing an employee ranges from one-half to two times the position's annual salary.[9]

Adding digital talent to your team involves much more than writing an eye-catching job ad. This toolkit provides not only practical advice for each step in this process; it provides an opportunity for company leadership to reflect on and define what is essential for employee success and, in turn, the key ingredients for profitable business growth.

[8] Rogers, B., "Is Onboarding The New HR Secret For Company Success?", Forbes.com, January 25, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucerogers/2019/01/25/is-onboarding-the-new-hr-secret-for-company-success/?sh=76eac79f1484.
[9] McFeely, S., Wiger, B., "This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses $1 Trillion", Gallup.com, March 13, 2019, https://www.gallup.com/workplace/247391/fixable-problem-costs-businesses-trillion.aspx.

Glossary of Terms:

Agile Environment: an agile environment refers to a workplace where agile project management (iterative approach) processes are followed.

Digital Employee: An employee who does technology-related work.

Digital Skills: The learned ability, knowledge, and aptitude to effectively perform a digital technology role.

Diversity and Inclusion: Workplaces that include differences in background, ethnicity, genders, and any factors that create a sense of belonging.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Typically offered by a third-party vendor, EAP programs provide employees with access to health and wellness resources.

Engagement: The commitment and energy an employee brings to the workplace.

Job Ad: Written document advertising a specific employment opportunity for a company.

Job Description: Written document describing the level, roles, responsibilities, skills, and experience for a specific job.

Offer letter: Written letter documenting employment agreement between an employer and employee.

Onboarding: The process of welcoming and performing administrative set-up for new employees to a company.

Recruitment: The process of finding new employees to join a company.

Retention: The ability and efforts of employers to keep an employee from wanting to leave their job.

Stretch Goals: Goals that go beyond the typical scope of a job to challenge an employee's growth and development.

How to Use the Toolkit

The toolkit is organized around three stages of employment: attraction and hiring, engagement, and retention. It begins with guidelines to help employers understand their digital talent needs and then delves into the three stages.

Each section contains essential concepts, tips, checklists, and sample templates. These sample templates are provided so that you can craft your own documents while implementing a hiring strategy.

To help illustrate the concepts in this toolkit, a fictitious company (Awesome Systems IT Co.) is used to demonstrate the materials.

(A glossary of terms in this toolkit can be found on page 7)

Key Legislation and Government Programs

Alberta Employment Standards

Visit Alberta Employment Standards to understand the current rules, regulations, and compliance measures for employers and employees in Alberta's workplaces. It is important to review and be current with items such as minimum wage, hours of work, holiday and vacation information, and workplace health and safety, as legislation and policy may change from time to time.

→ Alberta Employment Standards

Alberta Human Rights Commission

The Alberta Human Rights Commission offers information on rights and responsibilities of employers, including explanations on what information employers may ask prospective employees for.

→ Alberta Human Rights Commission

Government Hiring Incentive Programs

The Province of Alberta and/or the Federal Government may have incentive programs that cover a portion of your new employee's salary

→ Alberta Jobs Now
→ Federal Government Programs

Section 1: The Digital Workforce

Overview

As employers look to strengthen their businesses in the 21st century, digital skills are an essential area of focus. Sourcing and engaging the right employees, motivating them, and developing their skills are crucial to achieving business goals.

Digital employees bring important benefits to the workplace, including the ability to:

- Integrate new technologies
- Automate business processes
- Innovate and create efficiencies
- Enhance customer experience

Digital roles involve a broad base of skills and expertise in a variety of categories:

- Software Developer
- Front-End Developer
- Back-End Developer
- Full Stack Developer
- Cloud Software Engineer
- DevOps Engineer
- Network Administrator
- Machine Learning Engineer
- Data Scientist

- Database Administrator
- IT Analyst
- Cybersecurity Analyst
- Graphic Artist
- UX/UI Designer
- Animator
- IT Support Specialists
- Business Analyst
- Data Analyst

Competition for digital talent can be fierce for small and medium sized businesses. You might compete for the same talents with organizations that have greater brand recognition, well-resourced recruitment teams, and sophisticated applicant tracking systems.

Whether you have an HR department leading the hiring process or an online hiring process on your company website, this toolkit is designed to help.

Example Company: Awesome Systems IT Co.

To effectively illustrate how you, as an employer, can use the content of this toolkit, a "sample" company has been developed. Below is an overview to acquaint you with the business. **Awesome Systems IT Co.**

Company Overview: Awesome Systems IT Co. is a rapidly growing company committed to a culture of hard work and inclusivity. The company builds Geographic Information Systems (GIS) solutions to service the needs of people in remote areas. It uses drone and mobile technology to gather, manage, and analyze data in hard-to-reach geographies of the world. Awesome Systems IT Co. is a rapidly growing global company with a "work hard, play hard" culture.

Company Size: 200 employees

Hiring Need: Software Engineer

Section 2: Finding Digital Employees

Overview

Research tells us that companies with a formal process in place have greater success in reaching prospective employees.[10]

In this section, you'll find a step-by-step process, tips, and templates to help you be more productive in your search for digital employees.

Process for Finding Digital Employees

| Plan Your Hiring Goals | → | Develop a Job Description | → | Write a Job Ad | → | Share Your Job Ad |

Plan Your Hiring Goals

An important starting point is clarifying your needs so you can find employees who have the skills to meet your requirements.

Carefully thinking through what your hiring goals are in advance and writing down your thoughts can save you time, energy, and rework. First, decide on how much help you need and for how long. Next, list all the skills you need to hire for. Include both "hard," or technical skills, but also "soft" skills—those characteristics that make an individual suited for the role. Determine the budget you have for bringing on a new hire. Consider how well the work will keep a new employee motivated, and what opportunities for advancement you might be able to offer.

Completing the pre-hiring worksheet provides the basic information to find the talent with the skills and characteristics that best meet your business needs.

It may be helpful to research and review job postings on well-known websites and labour market information, as well as the median salary for a similar role.

One other consideration at this stage are the pros and cons of bringing in a contractor or freelancer versus hiring an employee; the latter case is the focus of this toolkit. To understand the difference between the two scenarios, the following publication from Alberta Labour Standards can help:

→ Employee or Contractor? Know the Difference

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10 Potter, J., Schrach, J, "3 Reasons Why Organizations Make Bad Hiring Decisions", McKinsey & Co., December 17, 2018, https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-organization-blog/3-reasons-why-organizations-make-bad-hiring-decisions

Pre-Hiring Worksheet

Write your responses to the following:
- What type of help do I need? (short-term, part-time, full-time)
- What type of day-to-day tasks will the employee complete?
- What budget do I have in mind for paying for this type of work?
- Will the work keep a highly skilled employee motivated?
- What characteristics are best suited to the work? (team player, resourceful, works with little direction)

Once the pre-hiring worksheet is complete, you should have a better sense of the type of job you'll be recruiting for, including the job responsibilities and the most critical skills required.

Developing a Job Description

Leveraging the work done on the pre-hiring worksheet, you'll now develop a job description.

This step is critical as it requires you to think about the job from the perspective of responsibilities and duties, as well as how and where the work will be completed. It summarizes all the important aspects of the job.

Key considerations:

- What are the primary responsibilities of the job? What is the level of complexity of this work?
- How does this job interact with others in the organization and externally?
- What is the reporting structure of the role? Who is the manager? How does the manager support the outcomes of this job?
- What is the level of the role? Entry-level? Intermediate? Senior? Leadership?
- Where does the work get done? Remotely? Office? Other locations?
- What are the skills, experience, and educational requirements of the job?
- How does this job support the company's mission, vision, culture and values?

Job Description Categories

The following chart includes the primary categories needed to develop your job description.

Job Title & Responsibilities – *Determine the job title*

- Use a job title that reflects the job
- Avoid generic titles like "Analyst" or "Engineer"; instead, use recognizable language that describes the job (see what other employers are posting)
- Consider the level of the role and how to reflect the level of seniority in the title

Responsibilities & Duties – *Summarize the responsibilities and list the duties of the job*

- Capture why the position exists
- List the most important duties of the position and the day-to-day work involved
- Use verbs to describe the duty and include how the work is completed
- Examples: analyzes existing data, manages business applications, provides technical assistance

Working Environment – *List the key attributes of the work environment*

- Describe what the work environment is like and how it influences the way work is to be done
- Examples: remote work or office environment, travel requirements

Work Experience & Skills – *Summarize and list the previous work experience & skills needed*

- Specify experience in related job functions
- Examples: years of experience, types of experience or projects completed
- List key skills and knowledge needed to do the job
- Include both technical and soft skills requirements of the job, such as cloud computing or team collaborator

Education, Certifications, & Training – *List the educational requirements*

- List education, certifications, or specific training requirements
- Examples: post-secondary degree, AWS Cloud certification, Microsoft Azure certification

Sample Digital Job Descriptions

The descriptions[11] below have been developed to provide you with an overview of common digital roles, a brief description, and skill requirements.

Find more examples of job descriptions, sample job titles, typical duties, and demand outlook on the eTalent Canada website.

Software Developers build applications and programs, then test and maintain those developed products. They work with build automation and version control tools to automate and validate applications based on source code and create consistent processes. They have knowledge of a variety of programming languages, including but not limited to Java, JavaScript, C++, C#, Python, and SQL. Software developers possess at least a basic level of comfort with machine learning principles and practices, and increasingly, must be proficient with building and using APIs.

Data Scientists collect, clean, and analyze data from various sources to build algorithms, models, and machine learning tools that automate and optimize processes. Data scientists have a strong background in data mining, statistical analysis, and creating and running simulations. They possess competency with machine learning principles and are proficient with programming languages like SQL and Python. Data scientists also tend to use and manage cloud products and data pipelines on platforms like AWS, Microsoft Azure, or Google Cloud.

Data Analysts are responsible for tasks ranging from data cleaning to data analysis and visualization. They use statistical methodologies, including descriptive statistics, labelling, and regression to extract valuable information from data sources. Data analysts also visualize data, create and implement databases, and develop collection strategies to capture and use incoming data for optimal quality. Data analysts are proficient with programming languages for data analysis like R, Python, SQL and have familiarity with database management platforms like Hadoop or Apache Spark.

UX/UI Designers are often a hybrid blend of software development and design. They understand usability, ease in navigation, accessibility, and other skills related to creating effective user interfaces and designs for desktop and mobile devices. UX/UI designers are utilized in web design, game design, visual effects, and even graphic design. While UX/UI designers do not in all cases need to be proficient with a variety of programming languages like software developers do, they do require knowledge of design platforms like InDesign and cloud computing platforms like AWS, Azure, or Google Cloud. UX/UI designers also tend to possess proficiency with web development tools like Google Chrome Developer Tools, jQuery, or Angular.js.

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11 Cutean, A., Hamoni, R., McLaughlin, R., Ye, Z."Canada's Growth Currency: Digital Talent Outlook 2023", Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), October 2019, https://www.ictc-ctic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/canada-growth-currency-2019-FINAL-ENG.pdf.

Full Stack Developers are proficient with both the back and front end of software development. They can manage IT infrastructure like databases or servers and develop and manage APIs along with other elements that focus on the functionality of the product. Full stack developers are also proficient with the front-facing parts of a website that operate according to the principles of user design and user experience. This includes architecture that monitors the responsiveness of applications, design features, and usability. Full stack developers are proficient with several programming languages like C/C++, HTML, Python, Java, JavaScript, and Ruby on Rails. They are also experienced with database management tools and platforms like MySQL or MongoDB.

Cybersecurity Analysts design, test, and implement security systems and protocols that are intended to protect an organization's networks from attack. Analysts must have knowledge of relevant cybersecurity standards and the ability to recommend specific and preventive measures that improve an organization's security capabilities. Cybersecurity analysts should have the skills to conduct vulnerability or penetration testing, risk analysis, perform security audits, and analyze security breaches to identify the causes of attacks. Cybersecurity analysts possess experience with Windows and Linux operating systems, IP networks, DNS, and proxy servers.

DevOps Engineers are a merger between software development and operations, working with software developers and IT, overseeing the full cycle from design to continuous delivery. They also provide guidance on system opportunities, risks, and cost-benefit analyses—all of which contribute to effective strategic organizational and project planning. DevOps Engineers are proficient with various programming languages like Python, Java, .NET, and JavaScript. DevOps Engineers often possess proficiency with Git and Agile project management tools (e.g. Jira), and are experienced with cloud-based services, particularly Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) such as OpenStack where they deploy their code. DevOps Engineers also have experience with containerization e.g. Docker), orchestration (e.g. Kubernetes), and continuous integration and continuous delivery pipelines (e.g. Jenkins).

Machine Learning Engineers create machine learning models and systems with the ultimate goal of developing and maintaining efficient self-learning applications and products. They perform data science tasks—including collecting, cleaning, and labelling data in preparation for analysis (e.g., a Data Engineer)—and create and test models. Machine learning engineers train and retrain the systems and models built according to overall objectives and keep abreast with developments in AI. Machine learning engineers are often proficient with several programming languages like Python, C/C++, SQL, and Java, use open source libraries like TensorFlow and possess experience with natural language processing and IoT applications.

Database Administrators are responsible for the integrity, security, usability, and performance of a database management system. They plan and develop the database, troubleshoot issues, and ensure that data is clearly tagged. They create permission guidelines and ensure that access permissions are appropriately assigned. Database administrators must minimize downtime of the database and increasingly require familiarity with cloud database platforms like those provided by AWS, Azure, or Google Cloud.

IT Support Specialists are responsible for assisting users across IT platforms and performing mainte-nance on those platforms. They are often tasked with installing, configuring, or updating software and provid-ing user support on issues or challenges that occur. This includes running diagnostic testing on malfunctioning software or hardware. IT support specialists possess knowledge of SQL and are familiar with ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) frameworks. They also have knowledge of LAN, VMWare and VPNs.

Other Important Skills to Include in the Job Description:

Communication

Decision-Making

Planning

Time Management

Problem Solving

Team Work

Example Job Description

Company: Awesome Systems IT Co.
Department: Information Technology
Title: Software Engineer

Responsibilities: Assist with product development and design of drone and mobile technology that gathers, manages, and analyzes data in hard-to-reach geographies of the world.

Duties:

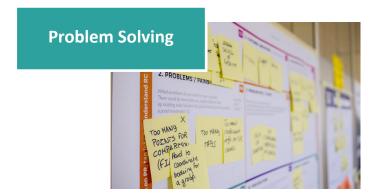- Work cross-functionally in the hardware, software, and interface design and development of new
- technology
- Develop and maintain end-user software that allows for easy operation of technology
- Develop and maintain end-user software that provides information on data collected
- Collaborate with team members to create innovative products and solve tough problems for
- cutomers
- Assist the research team in data analysis

Working Conditions: This position is primarily based in the office and offers flexibility for remote work. It also requires fieldwork as part of product testing. This may mean travel to remote locations for extended periods of time.

Skills:

- Team player and highly motivated by a challenge
- Certifications in C++, Python, and mixed environments
- Experience with C#, WPF, Dependency injection, MVVM paradigm, SQL, Entities, and Code-First

Work Experience:

- Product development experience in a software engineering role
- Experience in hardware interfacing such as cameras, sensors, and robotics
- Demonstrated strong team skills in the past and have experience working in an agile environment

Write a Job Posting Ad

Once the job description is developed, the next step will be to write a persuasive job ad. The goal of the job ad is to attract the right type of candidate and showcase your company. To help ensure you attract a diverse pool of applicants, various online tools are available to help with gender-neutral language: Textio, Total Jobs, Gender DeCoder, Be Applied, etc.

Some description items must be included, depending on a particular job posting site. The following items are normally included:

- Job title
- Company name
- Location of the job
- Company description and why it is a great place to work, to help candidates envision themselves working with you
- Description of the role and purpose
- Outline of the ideal candidate
- Type of role: full-time, part-time, permanent, or short-term contract
- Benefits
- Application instructions

Much of this information has already been developed in your job description. Still, there is another important consideration at this stage: marketing your company.

Marketing your company is about explaining to potential candidates why they would want to work with you and how they might fit into the culture. This includes descriptions of your work culture, values, mission and vision; the work environment; benefits; and other perks you might offer.

You can use the following checklist to highlight the key advantages of working with your company.

☑	**Opportunity to learn on the job**	☑	**Involvement in company strategy and decision-making**
☑	**Exciting and rewarding work**	☑	**Safe and healthy work environment**
☑	**Flexible working arrangements**	☑	**Training and development opportunities**
☑	**Environment of mutual respect and support**	☑	**Benefits: health, dental, childcare, vacation, etc.**
☑	**Innovative and creative work environment**	☑	**Exceptional perks: celebrations, events, paid gym memberships, a day off on birthday, etc.**
☑	**Relaxed, informal work environment**		

For items noted in your job posting, be sure to be realistic. Don't promise what you can't deliver.

Job Ad Template

Below is a job ad template. You can insert the details.

Job Title
Company Name
Location

Company:
- Describe your company, what you do (products & services), and who your customers are
- Explain why the company is a good place to work

Job Description:
- Summarize the main responsibilities of the position
- List the key duties that will be performed on a day-to-day basis
- Describe the work environment in which the work will be completed
- State how the work is important to achieving the objectives of the company

Requirements and Qualifications:
- Describe the technical and soft skills needed to succeed in the role
- Share the type and years of experience you are looking for
- State the education, certifications, and training needed to perform the role
- List any special requirements

Benefits:
- Describe any benefits or perks associated with the positions

How to Apply:
- Include how to apply: email, online, etc.
- State the deadline for applying
- Share your commitment to diversity and inclusion

Do's

✓ Share your company name, brand, and why it is an excellent place to work

✓ Use one font (such as Arial, Times New Roman, Courier, etc.) in 10, 11, or 12 point size

✓ Use easy to read, simple, and gender-neutral language that allows the readers to visualize themselves in the job

✓ Leave white space around the text, so it's easy to read

✓ Make sure the job expectations are realistic

Dont's

✗ Don't use fancy graphics, layouts, or fonts
✗ Don't use capital letters or italics
✗ Don't use jargon, too-technical language, sports metaphors, or non-inclusive language
✗ Don't use boring descriptions; use action verbs, let them see themselves in the role

Example Job Ad

Awesome Systems IT Co.
Software Engineer
Edmonton, AB

Company: Awesome Systems IT Co. is a rapidly growing company committed to a culture of hard work and inclusivity. We build and create Geographic Information Systems (GIS) solutions to service the needs of remote areas. We use drone and mobile technology to gather, manage, and analyze data in hard-to-reach geographies of the world.
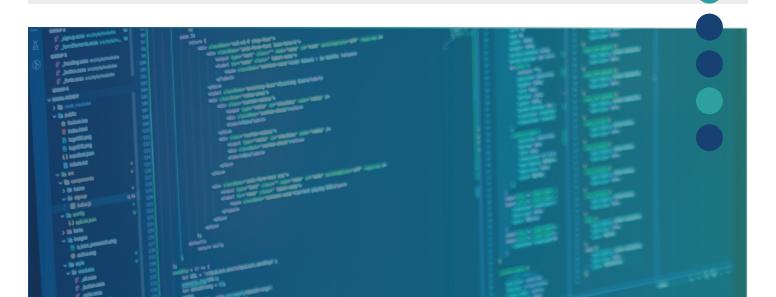
Awesome Systems IT Co. is fast-paced and committed to solving tough problems. We're looking to add an enthusiastic software engineer to our team who is fascinated by next-generation technology.

Job Description: Your primary responsibilities will be to assist in product development and design. On a day-to-day basis, you will be expected to help with hardware design, interfacing instruments, developing user software, and assisting the research team with data analysis. To achieve this, you will be working closely with a team of engineers. Your work will enable the company to innovate and solve tough problems for customers.

Requirements and Qualifications: You are an experienced software engineer who is committed to continuous learning. You are a team player and highly motivated by a challenge. You have completed certifications in C++, Python, and mixed environments. You have experience in hardware interfacing such as cameras, sensors, and robotics. Experience with C#, WPF, Dependency injection, MVVM paradigm, SQL, Entities, and Code-First are essential for the position. You also have demonstrated strong team skills in the past and have experience working in an agile environment.

Benefits: Awesome Systems IT Co. offers a comprehensive benefits package including health, dental, and RRSP matching. We also offer a minimum of 4 weeks of paid vacation to start and the opportunity to earn extra days off through a compressed workweek schedule.

Applications must be submitted by email to info@awesomesystemsit.com no later than July 8, 20XX.

Share Your Job Ad

Online recruitment is the most cost-effective and efficient method of sharing your job ad and getting maximum visibility. Job seekers, especially those with technology skills, primarily use online sites to find employment opportunities.

Online recruitment sites are also very useful for proactively sourcing candidates with the skills you are looking for. Many sites allow candidates to build profiles or upload their resumes that are searchable by employers.

Online Job Postings

1

This is the most common approach for finding candidates. Many job posting sites offer a free posting as part of their introductory job posting services.

This is a great way to get started when you have a limited budget for recruitment. Some websites to consider include:

- Indeed
- SimplyHired
- Glassdoor
- Zip Recruiter
- LinkedIn

Social Media

2

Social media is another effective way to attract candidates. Suppose you are active on popular sites like Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok and Facebook. In that case, you can use these sites to let people know your company is hiring, the position you want to fill, and showcase your workplace or current team members.

LinkedIn is an excellent site for employers. While there are many additional features with a premium account (which you must pay for), you can accomplish a lot with a basic account (which is free) and a wide number of connections. You can:

- Search for people with the skills you are looking for in your local area
- Share the job posting on your newsfeed
- Post one job free at a time on LinkedIn
- Create a "basic" free Company Page to link people, explain your culture, and link to your job opportunities

3 Traditional Methods

Traditional application methods like newspaper adverting still exist, but candidates tend not to look here anymore. This is not a highly effective way to find candidates.

4 Employment Agencies

Employment agencies can be helpful in sourcing candidates; however, there is a cost associated with this approach. Generally, when a candidate is hired through an agency, the employer pays a fee based on a percentage of the over all compensation (anywhere from 15% to 25% of the first year's salary[12]).

5 Other Ideas

Campus Job Boards: Post-secondary institutions tend to have all sorts of great talent, but they may not have work experience yet. Recruiting students for part-time opportunities, internships/co-op, and new graduates may be a great option, depending on the level of experience you require.

Career Fairs: Local industry organizations often organize careers fair to help employers showcase their jobs.

Hire from Within: A suitable candidate may already exist within your company. Giving current employees a chance to grow and change positions may be an option to consider.

Company Website: You can post your job on your company website, which provides an added benefit to potential candidates in learning more about your products and services.

Referral Program: Existing employees know what is takes to be successful in your company and can be an excellent source of referrals. Provide a referral reward—monetary or non-monetary (day off work)—as an incentive.

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[12] Sundheim,K., "A Guide To Hiring Recruitment Firms", Forbes.com, September 19, 2013, https://www.forbes.com/sites/kensundheim/2013/09/19/331/?sh=762bcf42caa5.

Interviewing & Hiring

Investing the time to develop a good hiring process upfront will significantly increase your chances of finding the best person for your job. This section outlines a step-by-step process and provides tips and tools that will help improve your effectiveness in the hiring process.

Process for Interviewing & Hiring

Screen	→	Interview	→	Make a Decision	→	Offer the Job

Screening

Not everyone who applies for your job posting will be qualified, therefore screening applications is an important step. Focusing on the role's essential skills and experience will help screen out unqualified people at this stage.

As you start to review applications, you can:
- Remove applications who lack the essential qualifications
- Look at the remaining applications for evidence of the skills, qualities, education, and experience you outlined in the job ad
- Remember to protect all the applicants' personal information by only collecting information needed and storing it securely in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act
- Applicant information should only be shared internally with those involved in the hiring process

You might want to consider having short-listed candidates complete an assessment test. A variety of online tests are available, usually for a nominal fee, to gauge "soft" or "hard" skills. These tests can be particularly helpful in evaluating skills that are otherwise difficult to measure in an interview, and they provide an unbiased means to compare candidates' skills. Test results can be used in narrowing a list of candidates to interviewees, or in making a final decision on whom to hire.

Employers may also choose to perform a social media check for short-listed candidates, particularly for executive or public-facing roles. Viewing a candidate's presence on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram can help verify their experience, and reveal problematic posts or negative comments about previous employers. In Alberta, employers must notify and obtain consent from any candidate before collecting personal information, including social media account names, and the candidate may withdraw consent at any time. [13]

If it's relevant to the role you are hiring for, viewing an applicant's public account on GitHub (a platform that developers use to host and share open source software) can provide additional insight on their work. Software developer candidates will often provide these links as part of their portfolio.

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13 Dublin, A., "To look or not to look", CanadianHRReporter.com, January 28, 2020, https://www.hrreporter.com/opinion/canadian-hr-law/to-look-or-not-to-look/325523.

Additional tips:

☑ Prioritize professional-looking resumes that are free of typos and clutter. This suggests a candidate interested in the role, with a good eye for detail, and is professional.

☑ Review the applicant's career path, promotions, and advancement. This may provide clues about their interests and commitment to continuous learning.

☑ Look for specific accomplishments in the areas important to the job. This helps you understand their skills and abilities.

☑ Consider the number of jobs the applicant has had and tenure in each role. This may give you an indication of their commitment to employers or performance issues.

☑ Don't consider any personal information on the resume such as names, gender, marital status, or religious beliefs.

☑ Don't overlook overseas experience and education, as that can bring a wealth of global knowledge to your team.

Interviewing

The interview is essential in choosing the right candidate for the position. It helps you get a feel for each applicant's skill and experience, motivation, interests, and how they might work with other company staff.

Determining the questions to ask before the interview is the ideal. This allows you to structure each discussion in the same way to ensure a consistent and fair process. When you ask all of the applicants the same questions, you also evaluate them in the same way.

A word of caution: avoid basing your decision solely on a candidate's interview skills. The best "talker" isn't always the best person for the job.

Types of Interviews

Pre-screen

Typically completed by telephone, this type of interview is used to narrow the number of candidates by completing a quick assessment of qualifications and experience.
Timeframe: 30 minutes

Behavioural Focused

This type of interview takes place most often either in person or virtually. It is used to assess how candidates have demonstrated specific competencies and behaviours by asking for examples of past experiences. This approach is based on the idea that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour.
Timeframe: 45-60 minutes

Technical

Technical interviews can occur in person, virtually, or as an assignment the candidate does on their own time. This type of interview provides candidates with a technical case study or problem and assesses their technical abilities.
Timeframe: 60+ minutes

Structuring the Interview

- Decide on your process
  - How many interviews?
  - Types of interview(s)?
  - Who will be involved in interviewing, and at what stage?
- Select questions that relate to the job descriptions
- Create a rating scale to evaluate the response to each question
- Ask all the candidates the same questions
- Look for evidence and examples from the candidate's experience that provides proof they can do the job
- Rate each candidate response using a rating scale

In-Person Interviews

If you are meeting with candidates in-person, you will want to be prepared for their arrival. Have the time set aside, be on time, and have a private meeting room ready that showcases your work environment. This will give candidates an idea of what their future workspace might look like. Offer them a glass of water and make them feel welcome. Be careful not to have candidates overlapping in the lobby: this can create awkward situations that may not reflect well on your company brand.

Video Interviews

With the increase in remote work, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many interviews are now conducted using video conferencing. As an interviewer, you want to ensure that your candidates have a positive experience and view your company as digitally savvy during the interview. This means ensuring you have a great internet connection and are using video conferencing software that is tested and reliable. You will also want to ensure your interview space is well lit with an appropriate backdrop. Other tips include looking into your camera and presenting positive body language (nodding, smiling, etc.) to show your engagement in the conversation.

Other Types of Interviews

Assessment interviews include a test or other activity candidates are asked to complete or participate in. You might consider asking a candidate to complete a job-related test or assignment, either during the interview within a set time, or independently, as "homework." Assessments can also take the form of a group project, where the candidate works with a small team of employees or even other candidates to solve a problem or complete a task relevant to the job. This type of interview can help demonstrate how a candidate will work with your team as well as highlight their skills and work style.

You might also consider a group interview, where the candidate is interviewed by two or more employees; participants usually include the position's direct supervisor as well as a member or members of the immediate team. Group interviews can help eliminate personal bias in the selection process, as multiple viewpoints are considered.

Do's

✓ Create a list of interview questions based on the job description.
✓ Check to see if candidates require any accommodation for the interview (i.e., people with disabilities may have special needs).
✓ Ask candidates how they have responded to situations in the past using real examples.
✓ Take detailed notes to recall the candidate's responses.
✓ Welcome candidates and take a minute to let them settle in before you start—even if it is just to comment on the weather or if they easily found the office (if in person).
✓ Be clear on the process and when you plan to get back to them.
✓ Prepare responses to questions the candidate might have about the job and your business.

Dont's

✗ Don't ask questions relating to areas protected from discrimination; these include race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.[14]
✗ Don't schedule interviews back-to-back. Make sure you have sufficient time, so you are not rushing or running behind.
✗ Don't spend too much time talking. Focus on listening; you want to learn about the candidate

Sample Interview Guide

Candidate Name:

Job Title:

Date of Interview:

Interviewer(s):

Introductions & Process Review
• Introduce yourself and your company. Introduce anyone else participating in the interview. • Provide an overview of your company and the job. • Share the interview process.

Interview Questions
• Select interview questions that align with the job description and evaluation criteria.

Question #1
Walk me through your resume focusing on some of your most relevant accomplishments. *Notes:* ***Communication:*** Demonstrated their communication skills during the interview—they presented and communicated their experience well. ***Rating Scale:*** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #2
What do you know about our company? What motivated you to apply for this job? *Notes:* ***Future Goals:*** Career goals or future ambitions align with the job. ***Rating Scale:*** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #3

This position requires the use of Python and C++. Can you describe how you've used this skill in your most recent job?
Notes:

Technical Skills: Showed how they have demonstrated their skill proficiency through work projects.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #4

How do you keep your technical skills up-to-date and relevant? Tell us about the most recent thing you've learned and how you went about it?
Notes:

Technical Skills: Showed how they have demonstrated their skill proficiency through work projects.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #5

Describe your experience with product development and how you've analyzed data to make im provements or develop something entirely new.
Notes:

Product Development & Design: Hardware design, interfacing instruments, developing user soft ware, and assisting the research team with data analysis.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #6

Describe your experience with developing user software and how you've helped customers solve challenging problems.
Notes:

Product Development & Design: Hardware design, interfacing instruments, developing user soft ware, and assisting the research team with data analysis.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #7

Provide an example of how you decided which work took priority and which tasks could wait a while? How did you make that decision?
Notes:

Work Ethic & Dedication: Demonstrated their ability to exceed expectations in the past and a willingness to go the extra mile.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #8

Describe a recent project that you collaborated with others in your organization using Agile methodology. What was your role, what challenges did you experience, and how what happened in the end?
Notes:

Teamwork: Experience working in cross-functional teams and in an agile environment.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #9

Tell us about a recent team project that didn't go well. What happened? How did you handle it?
Notes:

Teamwork: Experience working in cross-functional teams and in an Agile environment.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question #10

Tell us about how this job fits in with your career goals.
Notes:

Future Goals: Career goals or future ambitions align with the job.
Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Closing Questions

What are your salary expectations?
Notes:

What is your availability to start work?
Notes:

Do you have any questions for us about the job or company?
Notes:

Review Your Benefits

Provide an overview of your benefits:
- Vacation time, personal/sick time
- Medical / Dental benefits coverage (high level) & Employee Assistance Program (if available)
- Any additional perks such as membership dues paid for, yearly training budget, health memberships, etc.
- Provide overview of what equipment they will be provided with such as:
  - Laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc., whether work from home or in a specific location

Explain Next Steps

- Provide information on the next steps in the process (i.e. additional interviews) and when you hope to have a decision
- Ask for references if you are ready to move forward with the candidate
- Indicate that it was great meeting them and thank the person for sharing their background and experience

Overall Rating

Total Rating: ____/100

Comments:

Interview Resources[15]

Job-specific Interview Questions

→ Software/Application Developer
→ Data Analyst/Scientist
→ Database Engineer
→ DevOps Engineer
→ Front-End Developer
→ Full Stack Developer
→ General IT Professional
→ Graphic Artist/Designer
→ JavaScript Developer
→ Network Administrator
→ Programmer
→ Quality Assurance Specialist
→ Software Engineer
→ Systems Engineer
→ Web Developer

General Interview Questions

There are many websites you can use to find additional interview questions that will help provide insight on soft skills, teamwork, etc. Below are a few examples:

→ https://www.jobinterviewquestions.com
→ https://resources.workable.com/interview-questions/

Develop questions that will help you visualize how the candidate will work with others in your company, how they might fit into the work culture, and support the values, mission, and vision.

Candidate Evaluation

After each interview is completed, it is important to evaluate the candidate's interview right away by rating their responses. Having clear criteria to rank each candidate can help remove bias from the process and ensure objective decision-making.[16]

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15 LinkedIn Talent Solutions, "Recruiting Solutions for the Perfect Hire", (August 2021), https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions
16 Koller, Tim, Dan Lovallo, and Phil Rozenzweig. (2019, Nov 6). Bias Busters: Avoiding Snap Judgments. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/bias-busters-avoiding-snap-judgments?cid=eml-web

Understand how their skills compare to what you need by assigning a value and relative weight to each of the skills important to the job. For example, a candidate who exceeds your requirements will get the maximum points. Candidates with less experience will score less.

How to create the candidate evaluation form:

1. Enter the job requirements you are evaluating. These should align with your interview questions. An example is included in the sample interview guide.

2. Determine the relative weight of the job requirements by completing the rating scale. This should add up to 100.

3. Rate all the items after each interview.

Decision-Making

You can use a rating form similar to the one below to help you compare the candidates interviewed. This relative ranking will show you where candidates exceeded your requirements and help to balance the relative importance of the skills you need.

Candidate Name	Product Development & Design _/_	Teamwork _/_	Add Additional Requirements _/_	Add Additional Requirements _/_	Add Additional Requirements _/_	Total _/100

Other considerations before finalizing your decision are reference and background checks.

Many employers complete reference and background checks to confirm the information provided during the interview and assist with the decision-making process. Having your top candidate(s) complete a background check and provide references prior to making a job offer can provide additional insight. However, many companies refuse to provide information on past employees because of privacy or liability issues.

When asking for references, it is best practice to ask for three individuals to contact—ideally previous managers of the candidate. Background checks generally include criminal record checks, educational verifications, and/or credit inquiries.

Hiring for a Diverse & Inclusive Workplace

Employers who hire and build a welcoming and inclusive work environment can better attract candidates to their companies.

There are many talented candidates, including youth, mature workers, persons with disabilities, Indigenous people, immigrants, and others who are often overlooked in the hiring process.

Diversity and inclusion benefit your company by bringing a unique and beneficial blend of skills and perspectives to your workplace. Research shows diversity can foster a better understanding of your client base, leading to better customer service, financial results, and innovation.[17]

Remember to:

- Remove any unintentional barriers or bias from the recruitment process (i.e., bias such as stereotypes, first impressions, gut feelings, etc.)
- Ensure the job ad is written using gender-neutral language and doesn't screen out candidates from different backgrounds
- Ensure hiring and interviewing practices are fair and free from discrimination

Job Offers

This is the stage where you've selected your new employee. Congratulations!

Give them a call and offer the position first verbally and ask if they have any questions. During the phone call, share information and discuss the following:
- **Salary**
- **Start date**
- **Benefits such as vacation entitlement**
- **Any conditions of the offer such as a criminal background check**
- **Additional information of importance to the offer**

Having this discussion ensures that you have all the necessary information for a written job offer letter.

The official letter includes the start date, job title, salary or hourly rate, hours of work, vacation entitlement, and other relevant items such as the benefits offered. There is also a section where the new employee signs the offer to confirm their acceptance. Including a copy of the job description and any supplementary information about benefits is highly recommended.

When the position has been officially accepted, this is an excellent time to call the other candidates who were interviewed to let them know they were not successful.

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17 Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle et al., "Diversity Wins: How inclusion matters," McKinsey & Company, May 19, 2020, https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters

Example Job Offer

Awesome Systems IT Co.
Edmonton, Alberta
August 16, 2021

Dear Name:

Congratulations, we are pleased to offer you the position of Software Engineer with Awesome Systems IT Co. We are excited to have you join the team effective August 30, 20XX.

As per our discussion, here are the details of your offer:

Your annual salary will be $98,000 per year. You will also be entitled to 20 vacation days per year. Vacation is accrued each payroll period and prorated for the calendar year based on your start date. Your normal hours of work will be 40 hours per week. A three-month probationary period will apply. Additional details on company benefits are provided in supplementary documents.

Please sign and return a copy of this letter to indicate acceptance of the offer.

We look forward to having you as part of Awesome Systems IT!

Yours truly,

(Name, Title)
Awesome Systems IT Co.

I accept the employment offer

_____
(Name)

Turndown Script

Letting all the candidates you interviewed know the outcome of the process is the closing step of the hiring process. It is best practice to contact the individuals that were not hired and thank them for their time, preferably by phone or voicemail. This is also an opportunity to encourage candidates who would be suitable for future opportunities to stay connected leaving them with a positive impression of you and the company.

Below is a sample script:

"Thank you for meeting with me to discuss the position of (job title). The team and I appreciated you taking the time to showcase your background and talents with us. I did want to let you know that although we thought you had good experience, we decided to move forward with someone else whose experience more closely fit our needs. I want to thank you for your time, and it was a pleasure getting to know you."

Section 3: Engaging Digital Employees

Overview

Significant time and energy has been invested in hiring your new digital employee. It is important to ensure they're engaged even before they start. Engagement is all about the commitment and energy your employee brings to their job. As an employer, you are setting your new employee up for success.

Onboarding

Giving thought to onboarding in advance (the things you do to welcome and orient your new employee) is critical for ensuring a great first impression as well as setting the tone for long-term commitment and job satisfaction.

Research shows that businesses that use standard, structured onboarding processes realize higher productivity, engagement, and retention from new hires. A solid, well-structured onboarding experience starts even before a new employee's first day of work, with clear communication about job expectations and company culture during the interviewing process. It extends to ensuring all their paperwork is completed and they have access to all the work tools they will need on their first day.

Onboarding Plan

Below are some ideas to consider when developing an onboarding plan.

Before the First Day

☐ Send a welcome email to the employee to outline basic information for their first day like:
- Start time, who will greet them, what to bring, how equipment will be provided, business culture (dress code, team customs and habits, etc.), who their team is (pictures and job titles if possible), etc.
- Ask your new employee to provide a brief bio that you'll share with their team, including some unique things about them like their hobbies and/or a fun fact.

☐ Provide any additional paperwork to the employee required by payroll in advance of their start date (tax forms, benefit enrolment forms, etc.).

☐ Arrange for all work-related materials for the first day, such as computer equipment, IT logins, and software. If the employee is working remotely, arrange for the equipment to be delivered.
- Provide an overview of your company's expectations about the use of company equipment.

☐ Answer any questions they might have about their first day.

☐ Send out an email to inform team members the new employee is starting and explain their role.
- Add their bio and their responses to any of the questions they answered in the "welcome" email.
- Encourage the team to respond and welcome them to the team.

☐ Set up a "welcome to the team meeting" or lunch for their first day.

☐ Arrange for any training and let other team members know how they might help.

☐ Set up their desk or office with the needed equipment, office supplies, and company swag if they are on-site.

On the First Day

☐ Walk them through the physical workplace. Show them the common areas, safety procedures, break and washroom facilities, office supplies, etc. If they are working remotely, provide a virtual walkthrough of company information and websites.

☐ Show them how to access online tools, shared files or workplaces, software, etc., that will be important in getting started.

☐ Introduce them to team members, managers, and other key individuals.

☐ Provide them a list of who to contact for what (i.e., tech issues, HR questions, payroll, etc.)

☐ Partner them up or assign a workplace "coach or buddy" who can help with training and answer questions.

☐ Review important policies and mandatory training: HR information, workplace safety and security, workplace violence and harassment policy, etc.

☐ Provide a preliminary training plan for the job and review short-term goals.

☐ Take them for coffee or a team lunch to welcome them.

During the First Month

☐ Have a meeting to discuss expectations and set goals.

☐ Define how you will best work together, work preferences, and style.

☐ Set up regular one-on-one meetings to keep an open line of communication.

☐ Set up orientation sessions with other departments to help them understand the business and how each department works with each other.

☐ Have your new employee set up discussions with other team members to learn about their roles and how they work together.

☐ Review internal processes and workflows.

☐ Check-in regularly for questions.

☐ Complete needed training and set up any additional training for the coming months.

Beyond the First Month

☐ Continue to hold regular one-on-one meetings and provide feedback on their progress.

☐ Set up regular meetings with other leaders quarterly to help them feel connected to the larger picture.

☐ Discuss additional projects, set stretch goals, and the larger roadmap of key company initiatives.

☐ Continue to use the right tools to communicate with the new employee so they feel part of the team.

Creating a Great Workplace

An engaged workforce leads to increased individual and organizational performance. Creating and sustaining a great workplace requires time and attention.

Creating a work environment where your employees feel like they belong and are critical team members is part of this effort. The concept of belonging includes inclusivity and workplace diversity and sets the foundation for how people work together. Research shows that employees with a strong sense of belonging are over six times more likely to be engaged.[18] Fostering a sense of belonging starts with building a welcoming workplace that recognizes each employee's uniqueness.

18 Ramesh, Archana. (2020, April 23). Why Belonging is Important at Work: Employee Engagement and Diversity. Glint. https://www.glintinc.com/blog/why-belonging-is-important-at-work-employee-engagement-and-diversity/

Workplace Practices

Here are some everyday workplace practices for businesses to consider

Work Environment

- Communicate company values
- Align values with organizational culture
- Physical layout of the office that encourages interaction
- Give thank-you or appreciation cards to recognize employee contributions
- Implement green initiatives with employee involvement
- Support team-building opportunities and office get-togethers
- Initiate community or volunteer days

Leadership

- One-on-one interactions with leaders
- Provide leadership training to support the development of their employees
- Schedule regular meetings where leaders share information and talk about issues
- Department leaders share success stories
- Opportunities to work directly with leaders on special projects
- Informal and formal mentoring by leaders
- Welcome employee feedback

Benefits & Perks

- Childcare and/or eldercare
- Wellness and/or financial planning programs
- Flexible work arrangements
- Compressed workweek
- Remote work
- Extra vacation days
- Time off for volunteering
- Transportation and/or parking subsidies
- Tuition support
- Corporate discounts
- Free coffee, tea, and snacks
- Casual dress

Inclusivity, Diversity, & Belonging

- Know your employees' strengths, professional goals, and how they contribute to the business
- Ask employees for input and feedback
- Respect what your employees say they need to do their best work
- Accommodate employees with different backgrounds or priorities
- Communicate often and maintain an open-door policy
- Use language that is welcoming and respectful in all your internal and external communications
- Recognize different generations of employees have different perspectives on how and why they work
- Recognize and support your diversity by having committees to help support and generate ideas about how your company can continue to grow (LGTBQ2+, D&I, Social Committee etc.)
- Practice diversity in your recruiting and hiring
- Train leaders and employees on how to work in diverse teams
- Recognize performance and special contributions of individuals and teams
- Understand why people leave the company and address any issues you can control

Section 4: Retaining Digital Employees

Overview

Retention is about creating a work environment where people want to stay and incorporates all elements of the employee experience, from when a candidate first engages in the hiring process until they make the decision to leave. Employee satisfaction is influenced by designing smooth processes and creating memorable moments, along with displaying strong leadership. Keeping employees requires a planned approach to understanding what matters to the people who work for you.

Employees leave companies for a variety of reasons, including going back to school, another job, moving to another part of the country, retirement, etc. Often, though, there are work-related reasons why employees decide to leave. Common reasons include the following:

- **Company culture**
  - things like a lack of vision, mission, or strategy, unclear or frustrating decision-making processes, and a structure of micromanagement
- **Leadership**
  - including a lack of trust, support, and recognition by leaders
- **Healthy, safe, and inclusive work environment**
  - feeling unsafe, a work environment that's not well equipped (old equipment, rundown furniture) and not being employee-friendly
- **Work and personal life balance**
  - work that takes over all aspects of an employee's life, leaving no time for friends, family, or hobbies
- **Communication**
  - when a business doesn't share information or knowledge with employees

It costs money when employees leave. There is the cost of recruiting a new employee as well as lost productivity and learning. The potential loss of knowledge to the company can be significant if that knowledge isn't transferred effectively. Further, as specific skills become more difficult to find, there can also be a negative impact on the performance of the business.

Exploring strategies to make your business a great place to work is simply a good investment.

Key Retention Strategies

1. Creating community in your business culture
   - developing positive connections and relationships within the workplace help employees feel part of the business
2. Training and development
   - through providing opportunities to learn, grow, and develop skills, employees are more likely to feel positively challenged in their job
3. Compensation and rewards
   - being paid fairly and being recognized for contributions helps ensure employees feel valued

Creating a Workplace Community

One of the main reasons employees stay with a company is feeling they are part of a community at work. They spend time with smart, helpful, and respectful colleagues who make the workplace enjoyable. This sense of cohesion and collaboration with other people makes it easy to stay. Where else would they find such a great work environment? Ideally, the answer is nowhere.

Tips:

☑ Stay tuned in with your culture: assess it regularly and seek ways to improve it

☑ Ask for employee feedback (either formally or informally), communicate that you've heard their feedback, and act on what you hear

☑ Involve employees in the process of improving your workplace culture

☑ Create a flexible and supportive work environmente culture

☑ Upgrade your office, workspaces, and common areas to keep them looking clean and current

☑ Resolve workplace conflict quickly and effectively

☑ Celebrate successes! Implement activities and events to show appreciation for your employees

Understand Why Employees Stay

Staying attuned to why employees stay at your company is just as important as knowing why people leave. You can quickly and effectively understand why people stay and what might cause them to leave by asking them. Having conversations with your employees helps you to understand what is working well and where you can make improvements.

Questions You Might Ask
- What is great about our workplace?
- What do you enjoy the most about your job?
- What keeps you motivated?
- If you could change only one thing about working here, what would it be?
- What would tempt you to leave?

The goal of these conversations is to build on what your company is doing well and to do those things even better. It can also give you ideas about what can be done to improve retention and put plans in place to address employee concerns or unmet needs. Remember, if you are having these discussions with your employees, you must be willing to do something with the knowledge you gain, whether it's to implement change, make a workplace improvement, or celebrate what's working.

Training and Development

Look for ways to challenge employees and expand their skills. Employees often leave jobs that are no longer challenging or if the work no longer interests them.

Development Opportunities
- Offer new projects, tasks, stretch assignments, and opportunities to learn new things
- Provide coaching or mentoring programs
- Arrange job rotations and cross-training with other departments
- Foster employee involvement in community committees, initiatives, or special teams

Training and Skills Development
- Offer training and learning opportunities such as workshops and training classes
- Support tuition reimbursement for certificate programs or other post-secondary development
- Encourage attendance at external work-related workshops, conferences, etc.

Career Progression
- Offer internal career opportunities and promotions
- Consider internal employees before recruiting outside the company
- Create a transparent succession planning process

Compensation and Rewards

Compensation usually becomes an issue when employees are underpaid. Fair pay is vital to employee satisfaction and retention, but money alone won't keep people if they don't feel like the work environment is respectful and allows them to do their best work. However, if you are not paying attention to compensation and rewards, you may be giving employees a reason to leave.

Compensation
- Participate in and review salary surveys and market data to ensure your salary practices align with the market
- Ensure a job evaluation process that allows salaries to be easily explained
- Provide pay increases every year that match or exceed the market average

Rewards
- Provide the opportunity to earn more based on performance, such as a profit-sharing or bonus program
- Customize rewards to individual accomplishments through recognition programs or milestone bonuses like providing gift cards
- Offer other rewards and perks to your employees, such as extra paid days off or office events
- Tailor rewards to acknowledge that different employees value different things (e.g., recognition, tangible rewards like a round of golf or spa day, or time off)

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