

Are companies truly making an effort to recruit and retain top coders?

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Organisations have a real shot at tackling the talent shortage by changing how they hire coders and making sure their employees are happy, writes Mvelo Hlophe, CEO at [Zaio](#).



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As we move towards a more digitised world and many businesses pivot towards e-commerce and digital platforms for survival, the necessity for skilled programmers has never been more pressing. Despite this urgent need, the job market presents multiple obstacles for aspiring coders, while companies struggle to keep their valuable developers. This begs the question: Are businesses rising to the challenge of addressing the coding talent crunch?

Many companies still cling to outdated recruitment and retention strategies that are no longer effective in meeting their needs, despite the continuous evolution of technology. The aim should be for companies to adapt and grow just as much as the innovative software they put out into the world. If companies fail to address the long-standing barriers to entry and the increasing rate at which developers are leaving their jobs, they will be unable to meet the demand for skilled coders.

Aspiring developers encounter numerous obstacles when trying to break into the coding industry. One of the primary hurdles is the prevalence of outdated recruitment practices. Historically, companies have favoured candidates from reputable institutions and emphasised academic credentials over practical skills. This narrow focus has resulted in the exclusion of talented individuals who may lack formal education but still possess valuable skills and aptitudes that are essential for success in coding positions.

In traditional recruitment, hiring managers typically just skim through CVs, focusing on ticking boxes rather than truly evaluating candidates' skills and capabilities. This checkbox approach fuels bias and worsens the shortage of skilled developers in the industry, creating significant barriers for newcomers trying to enter the coding field.

Highlight the strengths of self-taught coders

To overcome these obstacles, companies need to embrace more inclusive recruitment approaches that emphasise skills and abilities over academic credentials. By focusing on skills assessments like problem-solving and coding challenges, companies can highlight the strengths of self-taught coders. This shift not only helps combat bias and welcomes new talent, but also allows companies to identify skilled individuals more efficiently and improve their hiring processes.

Companies can tap into alternative talent pools by organising developer competitions and hackathons. These events provide opportunities for young individuals and teams to showcase their abilities in a competitive setting. They also serve as a valuable platform for potential employees and employers to connect, fostering long-lasting working relationships.

Identify dissatisfaction, retain talent

To keep talent within the company, businesses should not only tackle entry barriers but also concentrate on retaining current employees. High turnover rates result from more than just salary concerns. Problems, such as limited career advancement options and employees perceiving a lack of value, are primary factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction.

That being said, investing in skills development initiatives can easily solve limited career growth prospects. By offering ongoing learning opportunities through Workplace Skills Plans (WSPs), internal training programs or access to online learning platforms like [Zaio](#), employees can upskill and work towards personal developmental goals. Introducing clear career paths with defined goals that can lead to promotions not only empowers employees to excel but also motivates them to remain with the company.

It can be challenging to identify employee dissatisfaction, yet it plays a vital role in enhancing staff retention within companies. The term 'quiet quitting' comes to mind. The concept gained popularity on TikTok in 2022, referring to employees who are doing just enough not to get fired. Employees often 'quietly quit' because of workplace dissatisfaction. However, this can easily be avoided through proper communication. By implementing regular one-on-one check-ins between managers and employees, the lines of communication stay open and it allows employees to raise any concerns and feel heard.

It's high time for companies to step up and confront the developer skills shortage head-on. By revamping their approach to recruiting coders and focusing on boosting employee satisfaction, they can effectively combat talent scarcity. The industry must align its practices with its innovative spirit and embrace a fresh mindset to thrive in the evolving landscape.

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