

Hiring and Retaining Development Talent



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Overview

- Observations
- Attracting New Talent
- Developing Young Talent
- Why Developers Leave

Job Market

My observations of the state of the IBM i development job market

Different Views

- Developers
 - There are no jobs
- Businesses
 - There are no developers



Realities

- Developers
 - There are no jobs where I want to live
 - My skills are outdated and I can't compete
 - I don't want to work in an outdated shop
- Businesses
 - No college grads know IBM i/RPG
 - Experienced RPG Developers don't have the skills we need
 - I need someone to be productive NOW

Questions

- Developers
 - How do I make myself more attractive to employers
 - How important is it for me to stay in my current location
- Businesses
 - How do we attract the best talent
 - How can we plan ahead for vacancies
 - Why do our best developers leave

New Talent

Mistakes made in the recruitment process

Common Mistakes

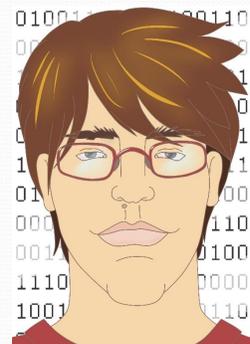
- Companies limit their pool of candidates with their job listings
 - Too specific
 - High requirements

Example 1

- Requirements
 - Minimum Bachelor's Degree in CS, MIS, or related field
 - 5+ years experience with RPG
 - 5+ years experience Web Development
 - Experience with Aldon CMS
 - Knowledge of Manhattan Associates WMS, JD Edwards
 - Experience in Pharmaceutical industry
- Preferred
 - Experience with C#
 - Experience in Mobile Development

Example 1

- This person most likely DOES NOT EXIST
 - If by chance they do exist, you cannot afford him/her
 - Businesses try too hard to find the “perfect” candidate when all they really need is the RIGHT candidate
- How many excellent developers read this job post and just move on to the next one?



Example 2

- Qualifications
 - Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
 - Knowledge of IBM iSeries architecture and AS/400.
 - Knowledge of business and management principles
 - Good communication skills and people skills
 - Use of PDM, SEU, SDA, and interactive debug applications tools
- Experience Requirements
 - Minimum of 5 years of work-related skill, knowledge, and experience as a Programmer Analyst.

Example 2

- iSeries AND AS/400?
 - It is important to get your system and technology naming right
 - Candidates with up to date skills will pass this by
- PDM, SEU, SDA, and interactive debug
 - Why force developers to use unsupported tools
 - Why admit it on a job posting



HR Involvement

- Be especially careful if HR is screening your candidates
 - HR staff are not IT
 - Often very good candidates are discarded because they don't "check all the boxes" on the list of requirements
- While it may seem convenient to have HR weed out the candidates, it is often better to do that within the IT department

A Better Way

- Requirements
 - 3+ years experience in software development
 - Understanding of application design and requirement gathering
 - Excellent written and verbal communication skills
 - Ability to work on a team as well as independently
- Desirable Skills
 - Knowledge of IBM i application development using RPG, CL, or other ILE languages
 - Experience in web development

Young Talent

Building for the future

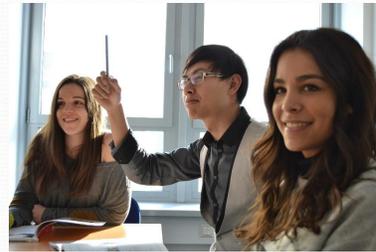
Entry Level Jobs

- Of top 50 job postings on Monster.com and Dice.com
 - 73% required 5+ years experience
 - 100% required 3+ years experience
- How do new developers get experience if no one hires inexperienced developers?



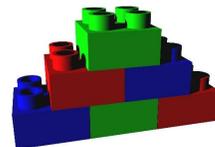
Colleges

- Build curriculum based on skills in demand
 - Have you voiced your needs to local colleges?
 - Team up with other shops to indicate demand
- Need to place students for internships, coops, and work study
 - Best resource available
 - Not time consuming



Invest in the Future

- Commit to building your next generation of developers
 - Proactive approach vs Reactive
 - Interns and Coops
 - Hire developers with no IBM i experience
- Don't complain about a problem if you are not working on a solution



Allow Creativity

- Fresh ideas and perspectives
- No “battle scars”
- Encourage discovery and experimentation



Retaining Developers

Why do they leave?

Invest in Developers



Invest in Developers

- Training
- Tools
- Professional Development
- Team Building

It takes more than a paycheck to keep good developers

Trust your Developers



Trust your Developers

- Install PC Tools?
- Telecommute?
- Social Media?



Encourage Innovation

- Review Shop Standards
- Encourage developers to question things
- Plan regular brainstorming sessions
- Set up “Lunch and Learn” sessions

Thank You!

About the Presenter

Brian May is the Solutions Architect for Profound Logic Software. He has also served as webmaster and coordinator for the Young i Professionals (<http://www.youngiprofessionals.com>). He is a husband and father of two beautiful girls. Brian can be reached at bmay@profoundlogic.com

