

The 5 Hardest Jobs to Fill in 2012

While you're planning your expansion, you're going to find that talent is in short supply, especially in these five areas.

The year flew by mostly because it was a very, very busy one.

Although the economy continues to face many challenges, the startup and tech industries are very much alive. The IPO window slightly opened up for companies like LinkedIn, Pandora, Groupon, Zynga, and Carbonite. We saw monster rounds of funding for companies like Facebook, Twitter, Dropbox. The appetite for seed and angel investing was extremely active. Tech incubators and accelerator programs kept popping up.

It was also a very busy year for hiring at startup companies, as you know, and it doesn't look like that will slow down in 2012. We've certainly seen opinions on both sides of the fence as to whether or not there is a tech bubble or 2012 will be another active year of investing. I'm an optimist and I believe the pace of investing will remain consistent. Yes, some companies will fail, of course, but others will scale and grow their teams at a steady clip.

Hiring the best of the best is an absolute must if you are going to build a successful company. You will need to be prepared to compete against big companies with deep pockets and other up-and-coming startups that also have blue chip investors and a game-changing idea.

So, what are the most competitive areas for talent these days? Here's a look:

Software Engineers and Web Developers

The demand for top-tier engineering talent sharply outweighs the supply in almost every market especially in San Francisco, New York, and Boston. This is a major, major pain point and problem that almost every company is facing, regardless of the technology "stack" their engineers are working on.

Creative Design and User Experience

After engineers, the biggest challenge for companies is finding high-quality creative design and user-experience talent. Since almost every company is trying to create a highly compelling user experience that keeps people engaged with their product, it is tough to find people who have this type of experience (especially with mobile devices including tablets) and a demonstrated track record of success.

Product Management

It is always helpful for an early-stage company to hire someone who has very relevant and specific experience in your industry. This is especially true for product management, since the person in this role will interface with customers and define the product strategy and use cases. However, be prepared, as it will be a challenge to find people with experience in these high-

growth industries: consumer web, e-commerce, mobile, software as a service, and cloud computing.

Marketing

I'm not talking about old-school marketing communications. Companies are looking for expert online marketers who know how to create a buzz of inbound marketing or viral traffic through the web, social media, and content discovery. Writing a good press release just doesn't cut it anymore, as everyone is looking for the savvy online marketing professional who understands how the current state of the web operates and knows how to make it work to their benefit.

Analytics

Since data is becoming more and more accessible, smart companies are increasingly making decisions driven by metrics. Analytics is becoming a central hub across companies where everything (web, marketing, sales, operations) is being measured and each decision is supported by data. Thus, we are seeing a high level of demand for analytics and business intelligence professionals who almost act like internal consultants; they help determine what should be measured and then build out the capability for a company.

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