

Top Tech Talent

Six Attraction and Retention Tips



Margaret Mitchell

As any company leader who has tried to hire top information technology talent already knows, this market is tight! We are all competing for the same talent and, as the company grows, adding talent at a steady pace becomes a daily challenge. Recruiting talent is an undertaking in and of itself, yet in a competitive market what sets your company apart is the ability to retain the team. Here are six tips to attract and keep top talent:

1) Get Everyone on Board

Take a collaborative, company-wide approach to talent acquisition. Consider offering aggressive employee referral bonuses and communicate openings frequently to current employees. Enlist the help of your company's marketing department to showcase your company culture, achievements and current career opportunities.

Social media also can play a big part as this is an ideal platform to highlight your culture through posting engaging photos, spotlighting your newest career opportunities and encouraging followers to share opportunities with friends.

2) Understand That Values Matter

Job seekers are not only looking for a technical fit but also a culture fit. Employees are drawn to companies they connect with so they can align the values that are important to them in their workplace. You must go much further than selling a job description – explain the “why” behind your company mission and what drives the culture.

Prospective employees ask questions such as: What is important to the company? What do you value in your employees? Start first by answering these questions internally, and then demonstrate this commitment to your values through company actions, policies, activities, performance metrics, engagement and more.

3) Turn Employees Into Advocates

Developing a culture takes time, effort and active participation from the top down. If company leaders promised a laid-back work environment during the interview process, live up to that promise. If the culture is centered around being family friendly, take steps to make that a reality, including flexible work hours.

When you walk the talk, employees notice. Your employees become walking billboards exhibiting your values. They are engaged and speak highly of your company with friends and colleagues. If the culture meets the expectations shared in the interview process, employees will genuinely want to recruit others to join the team.

4) Make Engagement a Priority

Once you have the right talent on board, it's crucial to keep staff engaged and energized. Rewards, recognition and feedback are key in any organization that is driven to keep a solid workforce intact. Tie

rewards, recognition and performance feedback to core values to reinforce the cultural and professional behaviors your company expects from employees.

Keeping a continuous feedback cycle reassures employees they are meeting expectations. If a correction is needed, make sure it is communicated timely and through constructive feedback. Encourage employees to solicit feedback from one another in an effort to improve work performance and gain insight.

5) Celebrate Together

Large and small accomplishments should be celebrated. For example, host free lunch days to celebrate company-wide accomplishments. This is one small (but valuable) way to tie all employees to the success of the organization. The more you can bring a company together in the celebrations, the more willingly your employees will join you in the trenches.

6) Invest in Development

CFO asks CEO: “What happens if we invest in developing our people and they leave us?”

CEO answers: “What happens if we don't and they stay?”

It goes without saying that talent development is extremely important. When you invest in people, your staff feels valued and the company knowledge base is that much stronger. Consider the investment in staff from the very first day they begin working. For example, we created a New College Graduate Program to hire and develop fresh talent. This college talent spends a month learning about Allegient, our best practices and expectations.

The new college grads work together on a team project, and participate in training on business etiquette, presentations skills and more. For team members who have been in the workplace for several years, we have a formal mentor program that pairs managers with small groups of teammates to help with their career progression through coaching.

There is no silver bullet to attracting and retaining top talent. It is an ongoing, conscious effort. Keep in mind that it's not just one department's job to hire talent – all employees need to be proactive and invested in the recruitment, attraction and retention efforts. By living in a culture where employees are valued and recognized, actively recruiting and retaining top talent in a tight marketplace naturally becomes everyone's job and success.

AUTHOR: Margaret Mitchell is director of human resources and recruiting for Allegient LLC. With offices in Indianapolis and Chicago, Allegient is a business information technology consulting firm focused on translating business challenges into technology solutions. Learn more at www.allegient.com