Five quick hacks for sourcing IT talent

The most popular hacks for time and cash pressed in-house recruiters looking to source top tech talent.
If Edison had a needle to find in a haystack, he would proceed at once with the diligence of a bee to examine straw after straw until he found the object of his search... I was a sorry witness of such doings, knowing that a little theory and calculation would have saved him ninety percent of his labor.

Nikola Tesla
IT Talent is increasingly difficult to source, particularly in competitive markets like London, Berlin and New York.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of companies looking to avoid recruitment agencies altogether, given the well documented issues afflicting the recruitment industry (ranging from high costs, to ineffective sourcing, to a lack of transparency).

Many recruiters have turned to sites like LinkedIn instead, to support their sourcing needs. But despite the benefits afforded recruiters in using LinkedIn, the search can often feel like you are looking for a needle in a haystack given the difficulty discerning who is actively looking for a new opportunity.

*So what else can recruiters do?*

There are a number of hacks that can work well for time and cash pressed in-house recruiters looking to source top tech talent.

Here are some of the most popular ones (which can be combined for best effect).
Tech meetups are really taking off (particularly in major cities). They offer companies direct access to a very targeted pool of candidates e.g. London Java Meetup and represent perfect opportunities for networking with top talent.

However, many are tightly controlled in terms of attendance (to ensure they are not over run with recruitment agencies), so it may be necessary to send your developers along to spot talent on your behalf!

Nonetheless these events are definitely a productive way of networking with tech developers in your area, and given more companies offer recruitment bounties the offer of free beer plus a bounty based on a successful hire are likely to be enough of an incentive to have your existing development team recruit on your behalf! Failing that, take a basic IT course on Coursera or at General Assembly, and network to your heart’s content.
Organization and effective management will make tech recruiting a lot easier. It’s important to have clear visibility of where your inbound candidates are coming from so that you can utilise these channels. Recruiting software like HireHive will help you do this.

With job board and social media posting and reports to track activity, figuring out where the best candidates are coming from will be easy.

Your recruiting software will also act as a database of candidates that is easily searchable with the function to add notes and keep track of all messages that were sent. Therefore if a candidate did not progress for a Senior role due to lack of experience, they may be considered in the future for a mid level role. With recruiting software it is easy to go back to past applications.

Days of sifting through email applications and Excel sheets of candidate names will be over.
Talent marketplaces such as Hired.com offer a range of benefits over and above the use of traditional recruitment agencies. Firstly, with placement rates as low as 10% the cost is extremely competitive compared to traditional firms.

Secondly, given that marketplaces are liquid by their very nature the likelihood of engaging with suitably qualified candidates is much higher. Finally, given these marketplaces only consist of active candidates who have been pre-screened to shortlist only the best, the search times for recruiters are reduced significantly.

“Your days of looking for a ‘needle in a haystack’ on LinkedIn may be finally over.”
Github is a central repository for source code, and its appeal as a location to source developers from is obvious. Firstly, it is a resource that practically every engineer uses with over 7 million users worldwide (and if a candidate does not have a GitHub profile it is definitely a red flag).

Secondly, daily active usage levels tend to be high (and will certainly be much higher than would be the case on LinkedIn).

In short this is where they spend spare time. Finally, given it is essentially a place for developers and engineers to post work and to engage, it is easier to evaluate what they can do rather than what they say they can do.
After that it is a case of running some boolean searches to draw up a shortlist of candidates you want to engage with e.g. site:github.com java “joined on” “public activity” location "london" - tab.activity etc.

You may also want to qualify by followers. If someone has a lot of followers, he/she is well respected in the community and probably publishes code that a lot of people fork on GitHub. Hence, they candidates will be in demand so are unlikely to need the services of an intermediary to secure an offer.

Similarly, if recruiting for a junior hire limiting follower numbers will also help you qualify better i.e. use search strings like: location:London, language:ruby, followers:2..75.
Stack Overflow is a free Q&A site and community for programmers and developers. It also represents an excellent source from which to identify candidates offering similar benefits to those of Github.

Much like Github, it is a case of running searches along similar lines e.g. site:stackoverflow.com/users location "london".

As with GitHub though, it also suffers from the limitation of not being a recruitment platform per se, so while it does provide access to candidates, whether or not they are actively looking or receptive to an approach is not clear.
It is also worth using browser extensions such as 360 Social (www.360social.me) which pull in data from over 200 social networks, enabling you to get a more rounded view of candidates.

In summary, experienced recruiters are increasingly embracing new platforms to help them source candidates for IT roles. However, most of these solutions do not offer a silver bullet to sourcing.

The one exception are the talent marketplaces which marry the best of traditional recruitment with modern technology, and given the candidates are actively looking, prescreened and curated into a manageable list the time saving benefits alone are compelling.
Building an Employee Referral Program

About HireHive

We’ve created easy to use software that helps you manage your recruiting from start to finish. Post jobs to job boards and social media channels with just one click and manage all your candidates in one place. You can set up referral campaigns and keep track of exactly where your hires are coming from.

Unlimited admins

Add your colleagues to HireHive and collectively manage all your hiring in one place. Discuss applications with your team using the @mention.

Job board posting

Get the right candidates for your jobs with automatic job board posting.

Unlimited Referral Campaigns

Let your employees help you find the best candidates with easy to set up referral campaigns for your roles.

Candidate communication

Send an email to candidates directly through HireHive and easily keep track of all communication with each candidate.

Learn more at hirehive.io