

WHITEPAPER

What do Tech Talent Want in 2023?



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A word from Mark Chaffey, CEO of hackajob

In today's highly competitive tech landscape, attracting and retaining top tech talent has become more challenging than ever before.

With an ever-growing demand for highly skilled professionals, companies are under immense pressure to hire the best talent, and fast.

This whitepaper aims to shed light on the importance of listening to tech talent, understanding their needs, wants and hopes. By taking a deep dive into the perspectives of those working in tech, we hope to equip organisations with the insights they need to create a strong and sustainable employer brand, helping them to hire fast and at scale, long term.

Key themes included in this whitepaper are the importance of company culture, tech stack and employer brand. By keeping up with the latest trends and offering a diverse range of tools and technologies, learning and development opportunities and of course, high salaries, companies can show that they are serious about investing in the growth and development of their employees.

Remember, tech talent are constantly on the lookout for a company that values work-life balance, diversity and inclusion, and a positive and supportive work environment. By creating a company culture that fosters these values, organisations will be able to attract and retain top talent.

Overall, this whitepaper provides valuable insights into the needs and aspirations of tech talent. I hope that by reading this document, organisations will be better equipped to create a company culture that resonates with tech talent, and build a sustainable employer brand that attracts and retains the best and brightest in the field.



Mark Chaffey
Co-Founder & CEO,
hackajob

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A word from Luke Drury, Head of Engineering at Gearset

“We’re pleased to have partnered with hackajob on this whitepaper to explore tech talent in this ever-changing market.

At Gearset, we believe that engineers thrive in an open, trusting environment where they can do work that’s interesting and makes a difference.

The findings from this whitepaper echo this belief, which is great to see.”

Luke Drury
Head of Engineering,
Gearset

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For 2023, tech talent have expanded their ideas of what truly matters to them.

Overwhelmingly, whilst new ways of working such as flexible hours and being fully remote have truly captured the attention of employees, organisations should invest their efforts in furthering the work/life balance of people within their businesses.

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Our Mission

hackajob

At hackajob, we created our platform to enable the world to build the future, today. It is why we believe dreaming big, yet searching small, is the secret to a successful job search. But how great people and great organisations find each other is broken.

It is opaque, biased and plagued by a terrible experience. And as the demand for technical talent continues to rise, not enough is being done to create the talent of tomorrow. We want to change this with radical transparency, the best-in-class service and a long-term approach to talent, all powered by technology.

We see a world where technical talent have an incredible experience developing their careers and finding the right company to unleash their full potential, whilst employers are able to attract, nurture and retain the talent they need to thrive in the technical economy.

Our mission is to make the hiring process fairer, faster and based on skills rather than backgrounds, so that people can get the job they deserve and earn what they're worth.

Having a community of over half a million technical people on our platform is no mean feat, and we like to think we know what we're talking about. In fact, we've been listening, more closely than ever before, and have honed in on the desires, wants and needs of tech talent, in order to create this whitepaper.

Gearset

Gearset is the market-leading Salesforce DevOps platform. Their mission has always been to set the standard in Salesforce DevOps by building a deep understanding of their users, then solving their problems with a team of smart, pragmatic and focused people that you'll love to spend time with.

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Introduction

Our report ‘[What do Tech Talent Want in 2021?](#)’ came at a time when working patterns, salaries, benefits and roles were in a state of flux. As the global landscape changed in an unprecedented manner, so too did the ways in which companies could attract new talent.

“It’s clear that technical talent expect more from the places they work, and when it comes to the future of work, offering remote as a ‘perk’ is no longer an option.”

– From our ‘[The Great Disconnect: How Tech Talent and Employers have Never been more Misaligned](#)’ report

Two years ago we conducted a study to understand what technical talent truly wanted and the results were shocking. From location preferences to hybrid working and upskilling, we covered the areas that were most important to tech job seekers, in the ever-changing world of work.

Over 70% of tech employees wanted to work completely remotely in 2021, whilst the majority of employers thought that tech teams should be in the office up to 3 days a week. This statistic may no longer come as a surprise in 2023, however, it merely scratches the surface of understanding the gap between employers and tech talent. Within our study, we captured the growing divide and disconnect between employees and employers and gave insights into how the future would look.

The landscape has changed again

Two years on, and amidst a shaky economy and multiple layoffs, we’ve again analysed exactly what it is that tech talent are looking for in 2023 and beyond. Suffice to say, that three years on from the beginning of both the turn of a new decade and a global pandemic, there have been many changes to what helps to attract, engage and retain tech talent.

Some perks, such as flexible working, have now become commonplace and no longer differentiate a good company from another to employees, whilst some unexpected benefits have emerged as essential to tech talent, such as company culture. So how can companies and hiring managers keep up with this ever-developing work dynamic?

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Technology waits for no one – companies must keep up

It is easy to think that the tech layoffs that happened in late 2022 / early 2023 have stilled the waters in tech hiring, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Whilst many companies such as [Amazon](#), [Google](#), [Meta](#) and [Microsoft](#) have made several adjustments to their staff, many more organisations are still gearing up to make more tech hires than ever before, in order to fulfil their company goals and steer their strategy for the future.

But what does this mean for tech talent? Quite simply, there are still plenty of organisations hiring, and now many more people searching for new roles. Whilst salary will always be key to any tech job seeker, it is crucial that companies look outside of just remuneration in order to retain the tech talent they already have.

This report will delve into the current desires of technical talent in detail and aims to supply engineers with the insights and support they need to advance their careers, while providing employers with actionable takeaways on how to better attract and retain tech talent. Here are some key findings:

Key Discoveries

A growing number of tech talent want to move jobs – and quickly

- Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of tech talent are unhappy with their roles and have looked for a new job in the past six months
- 20% of tech talent are ready to leave their jobs as soon as possible, with only 11% happy to stay in their current role

Company Culture is King

- After compensation, candidates are most attracted to a role and organisation by the overall culture (15.1%) and mission (13.1%)
- When asked what they loved most about their current company / what makes them stay, almost half of all surveyed (44%) said company culture followed by flexible/remote working (13.1%)

New ways of working are here to stay

- Remote working is the aspect technical talent enjoy most about their jobs, ranking above tech stack, location and benefits
- The biggest work-related frustrations and challenges include lack of learning and development, not feeling valued and salary

There is a lot more employers can do to attract, engage and retain tech talent

- 83% of tech talent want to see a 4 day week introduced
- Working on their own terms is highly important to tech talent – remote working, flexible working and location are amongst some of highest aspects to why they enjoy their current roles
- Flexible working, remote working, and annual leave are the most important benefits to tech talent (excluding salary)

What attracts tech talent

On the surface, attracting tech talent may seem like an easy task. Pay a high salary, give unlimited holidays and use popular technology... It couldn't be simpler. Yet, why do so many companies have such high attrition rates, eye-watering costs per hire and a lengthy time to hire the tech talent they desperately need? To put it simply: it is difficult to attract tech talent in 2023, when you have to position your organisation within a crowded and competitive market.

First, it is important to understand how tech talent found their current roles, as well as what aspects would attract them to new opportunities.

What attracts tech talent to an organisation?

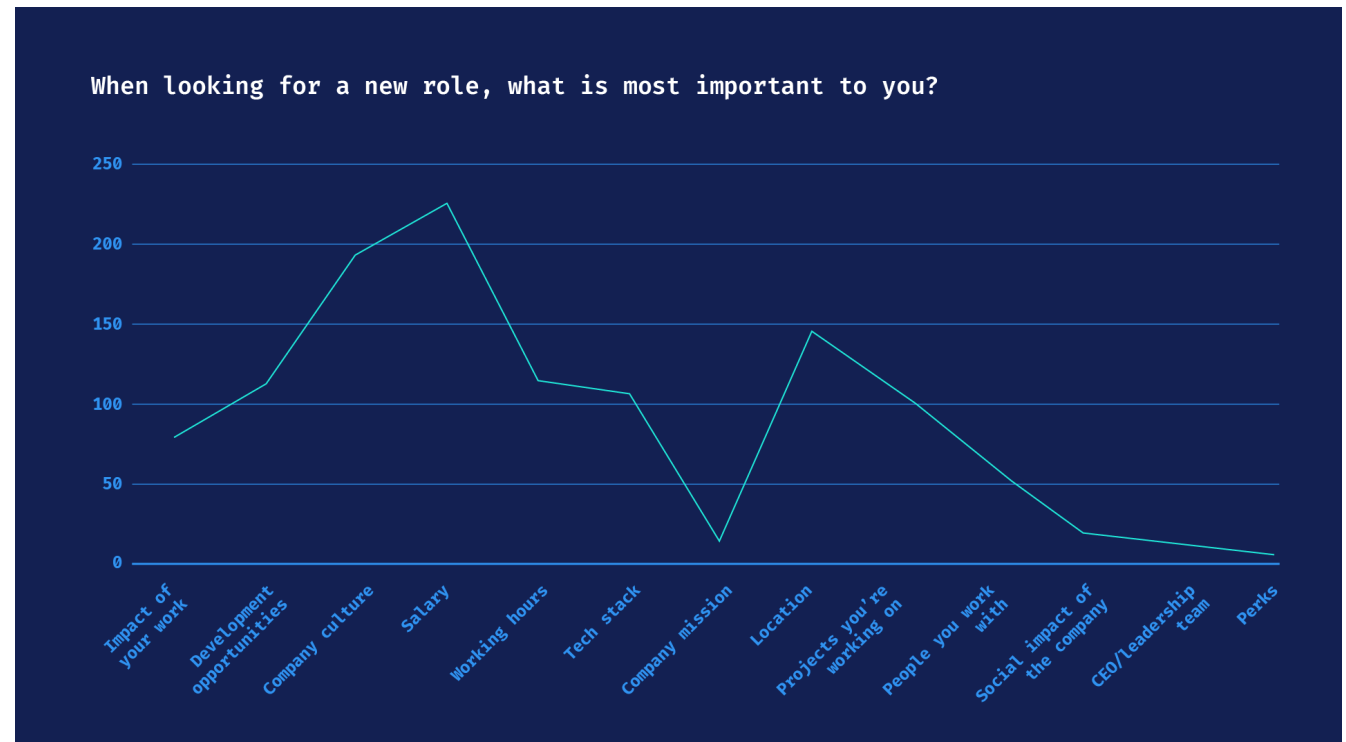
Naturally, remuneration is an important part of why tech talent are initially interested in their current roles, with almost 1/3 of those surveyed claiming that this was what most attracted them to the job and company.



But money alone won't keep even the best of tech talent. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the reputation of a company and big benefits were some of the aspects that least attracted technical talent. In fact, long gone are the days when having a big brand name was enough to draw in talent. When almost all companies offer the same sort of benefits, organisations must think outside the box to discover and nurture talent.

Attracting tech talent to new roles

If you are looking to attract new tech talent to the roles your organisation has on offer, it is a good idea to understand exactly what is important to them when considering venturing further afield. Ask yourself – what can my organisation provide them with, that is different from anyone else? This unique Employer Value Proposition (EVP) is key to effectively hiring tech talent. For example, whilst working hours are important to tech talent, so are development opportunities in the company and being able to make an impact with their work. More and more, tech talent are wanting to make a difference in the workplace, and take charge of their careers.



Tech stack and location are also important factors for tech talent when considering a new role. Over the past few years, and as evidenced in our report [‘The Tech Jobs Bubble: Hiring Trends For 2023’](#), despite many companies ditching a 5-day-a-week in-office stance, organisations searching to hire the best talent still need to expand their thinking when it comes to location. Tech talent appreciate more delocalised roles, shorter commute times (if any), and a company that keeps up with technology trends.

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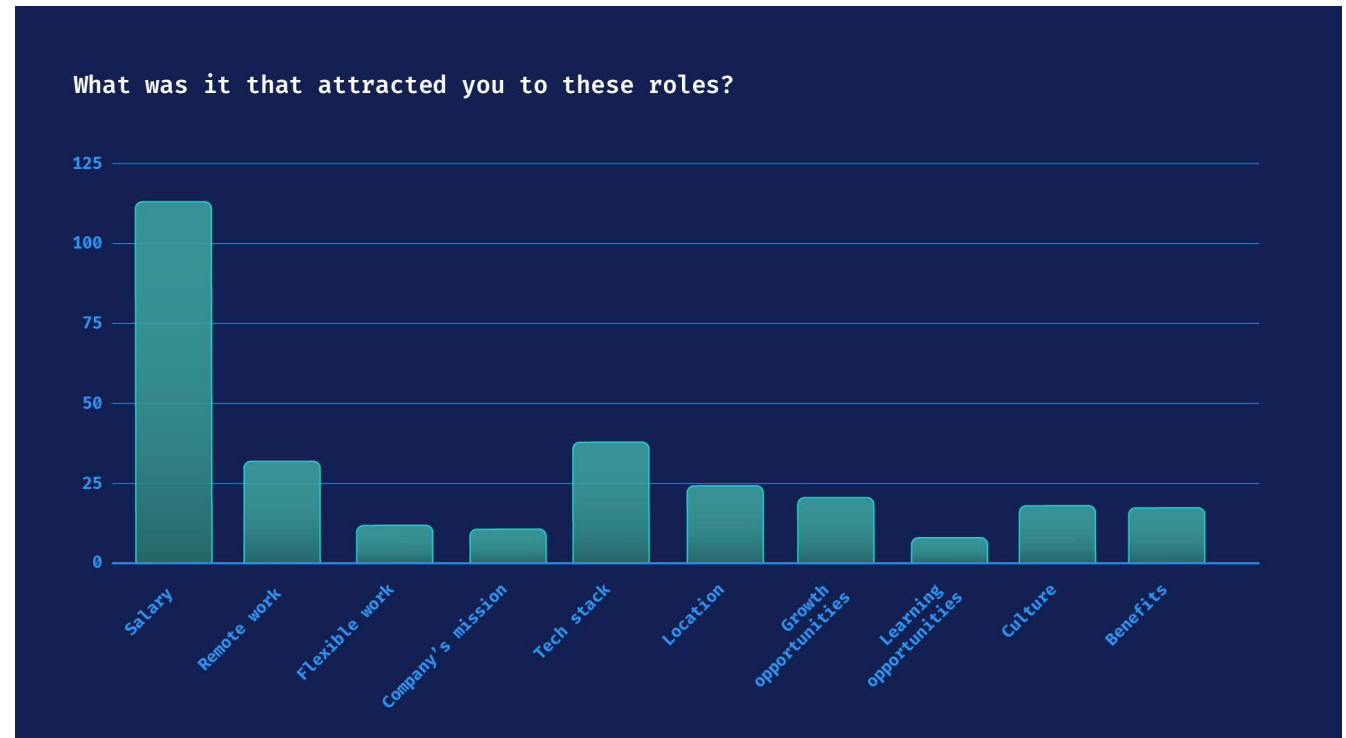
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“A world of hybrid working, or remote working has enabled a generation of developers to work on their own terms and in conditions that are more suitable for their working lives. As more companies race to embrace regional tech talent, we will see an increase in more decentralised hires, possibly solving other issues facing tech such as the cost of living crisis and lack of diversity.”

– From our ‘The Tech Jobs Bubble: Hiring Trends for 2023’ report

As mentioned previously, only 25% of tech talent have not looked for a new role in the past 6 months. When reviewing what it was that attracted them to new roles, growth opportunities, tech stack, location and remote working reigned supreme.



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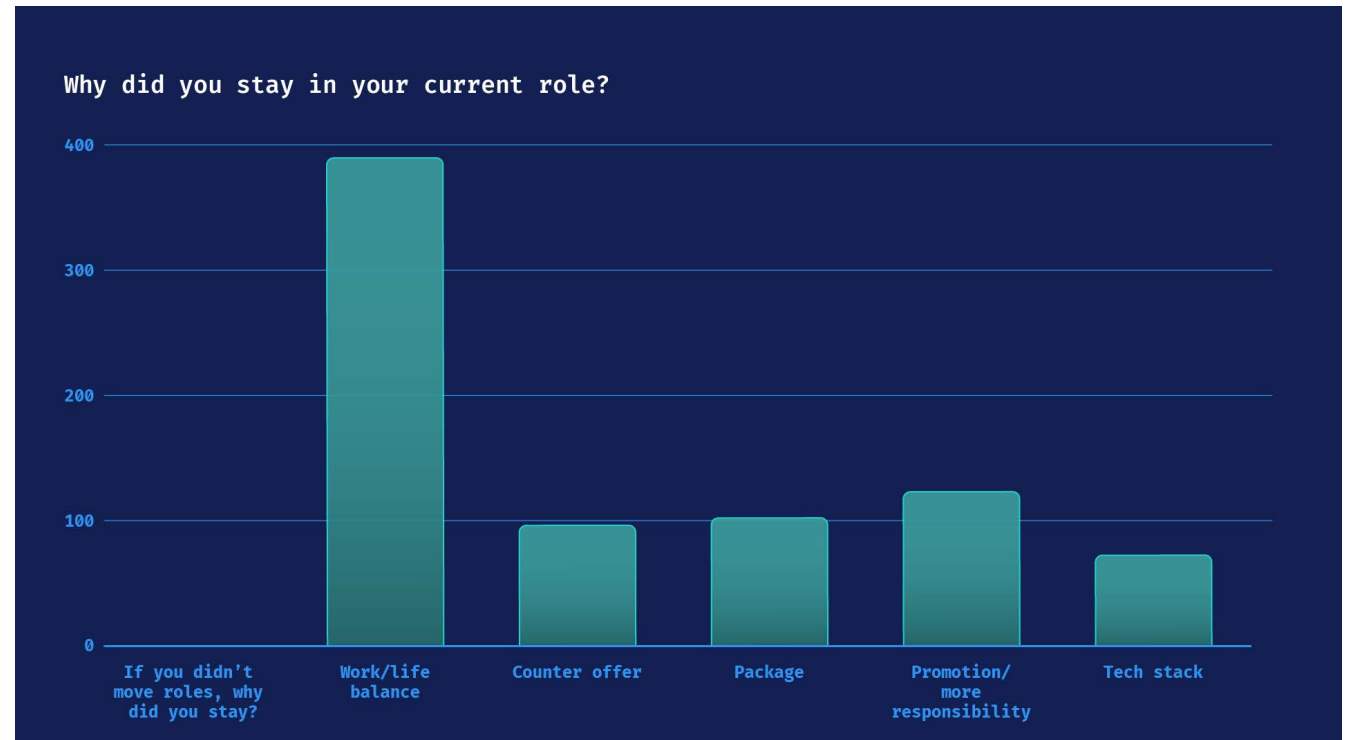
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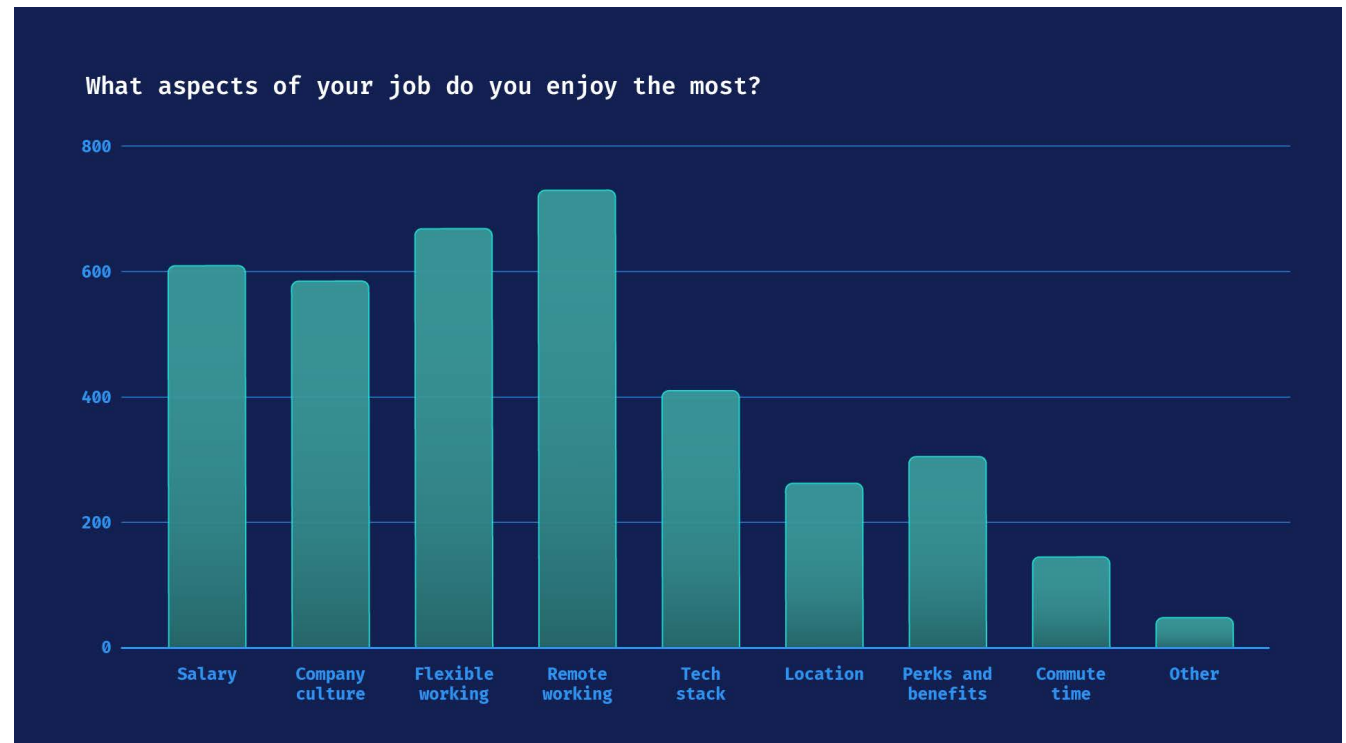
On the other hand, for those who had entertained other companies, the reasons for them staying were clear.



Working on their own terms and taking their career into their own hands is far more important to tech talent in 2023 than ever before. The idea of curating a work/life balance that is beneficial to them, and not their employer, is much higher than in 2021, as is receiving more responsibility and the overall job package.

What makes tech talent stay in a role

It's not all doom and gloom for organisations, however, as some of the talent surveyed are not phased by new career opportunities and are happy to stay in their current roles. For employers to purposefully grow their tech teams, it is essential to understand what aspects of the job their employees enjoy the most, so they can continue to invest in this and make their employees' voices heard.



Continuing in the theme of working on their own terms, those who enjoy their work and have not looked for a new job in the past six months, seem to have greater freedoms than those who want to leave their current role. Amongst these, flexibility and remote working topped the list of aspects that are enjoyed most, as well as salary and the age-old concept of company culture.

Company Culture

Company culture is one of the most substantial organic ways of retaining employees and boosting team morale in any organisation. It isn't always easy to get it right as a company scales in size, but when done well, it can transform retention rates in a big way.

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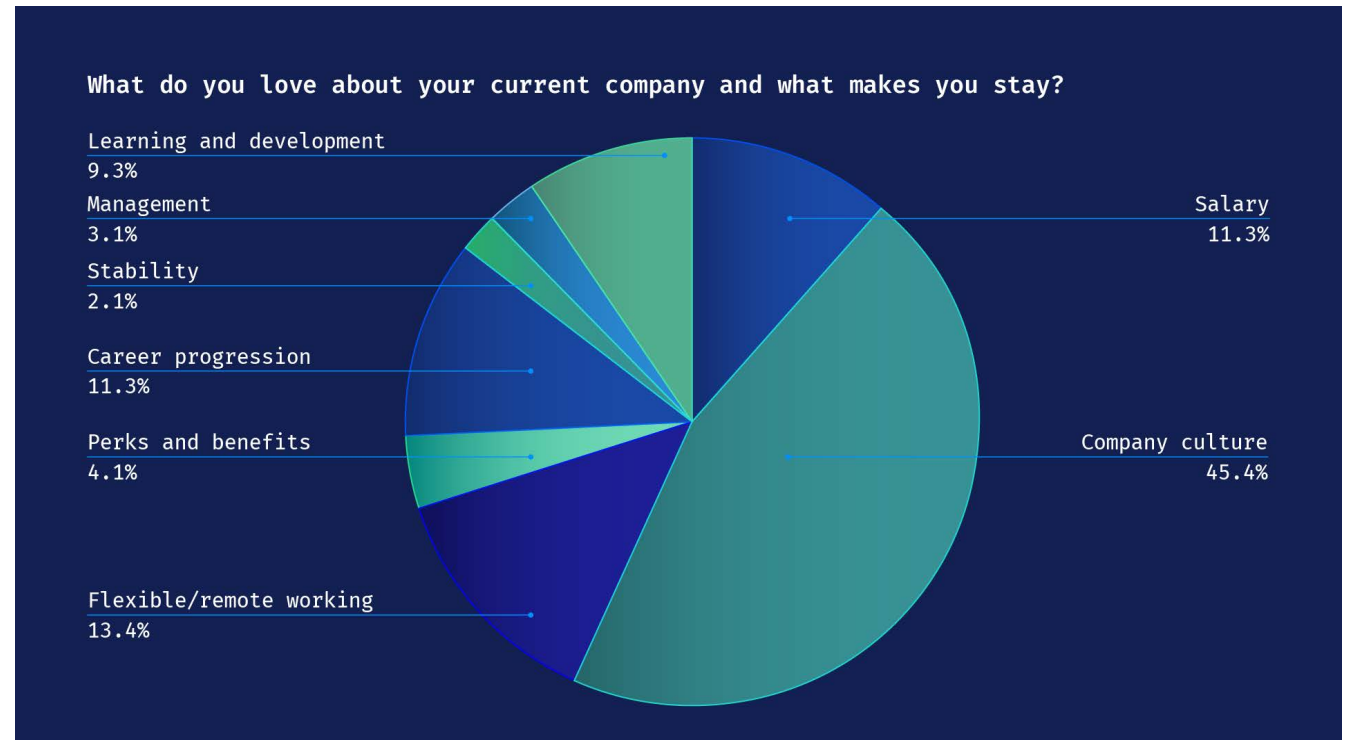
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It would be an error to dismiss company culture as something that only a [Gen-Z workforce](#) would be moved by. If anything, the past few years have taught us anything about the world of work, it is to not underestimate how much culture, development and freedom mean to the general workforce. Across all ages and seniority levels, what makes most people stay in their company – and what they love the most – is company culture, with almost 50% of those surveyed agreeing with this notion.



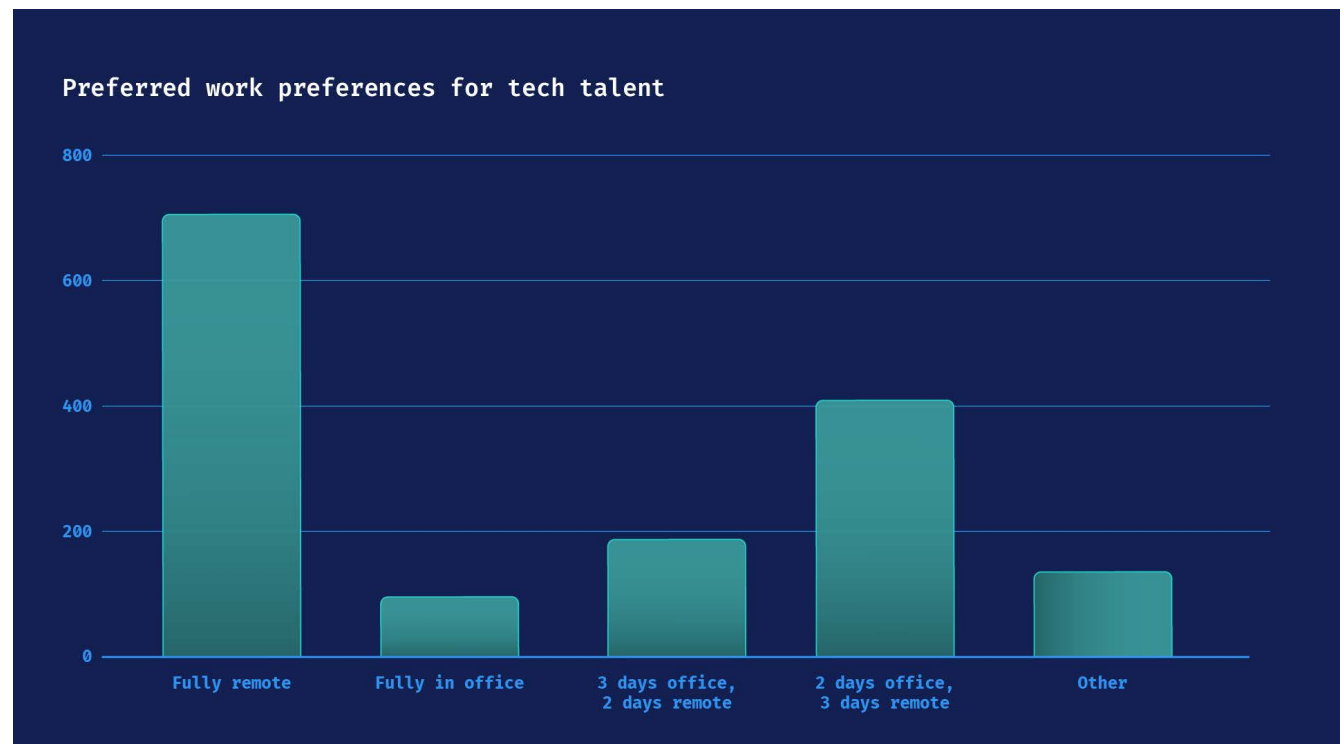
Company culture can be easily influenced by toxic ideals, so it is important for your organisation to be clear on what you expect, and then evidence this from the top down. Tech talent will see this, and take it into account in their overall working experience. From those surveyed, it is clear that company culture is a huge draw in staying in a role. Tech stack, colleagues, and even salary can be consistent, but each organisation's culture is unique and if you let it, can be a huge selling point to tech talent.

Remember that whilst ideas such as pizza and beers in the office, may seem like fun ways to draw colleagues into the office and engage with them directly, only 4% of the tech talent we surveyed state that 'perks and benefits' is something they love about their current company/makes them stay. Organisations need to find new ways to invest in tech talent, and creating an inclusive culture where staff have a say on the ways in which they like to work, is one such way to do this.

New ways of working

Long gone are the days where people would commute for hours at a time into an office 5 days a week; whilst the tech industry, in general, has embraced remote working much earlier than other industries, there is still a long way to go when it comes to bridging the gap between what tech talent want and what employers are demanding.

To put it simply - remote work options will help you to attract technical candidates whilst also opening up the pool of talent to a much wider audience, therefore increasing your chances of filling your roles.



An overwhelming number of respondents signalled that their preferred way to work is fully remote, contrary to growing numbers of organisations signalling mandatory time in the office, such as two to three days a week.

It is for each company to decide what set-up works best for them, however, it would be remiss to ignore the desires of the tech talent you are trying to hire. It is essential to understand why employees are opting for fully remote working. Contrary to popular belief, it isn't to work less – quite the opposite. Being able to work in an environment that you are comfortable in as well as having access to a better work/life balance, is clearly something that tech talent feel as though they missed out on before. Taking the needs of candidates into account, should make for a much smoother hiring process overall.

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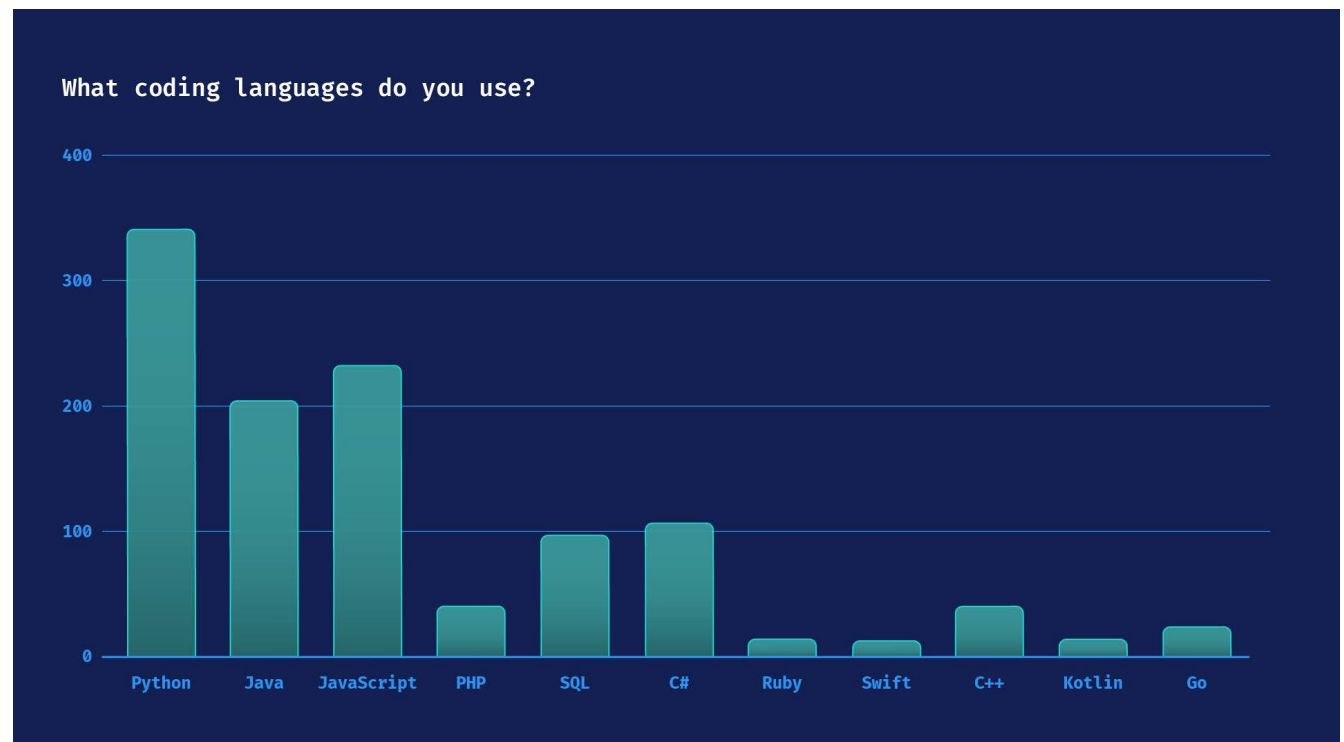
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Tech stack



Python has once again topped the list of coding languages used by tech talent, followed closely by Javascript, Java and C#. Tech stack was a key factor when looking at ways to attract new talent, and will similarly be a key factor in retaining the tech talent you already have.

Working on legacy code can easily push away some of the biggest and brightest minds in tech, so ensuring that your organisation is adopting new technologies and modern approaches, or looking for agile leaders to help them do so, will be key to lowering attrition rates.

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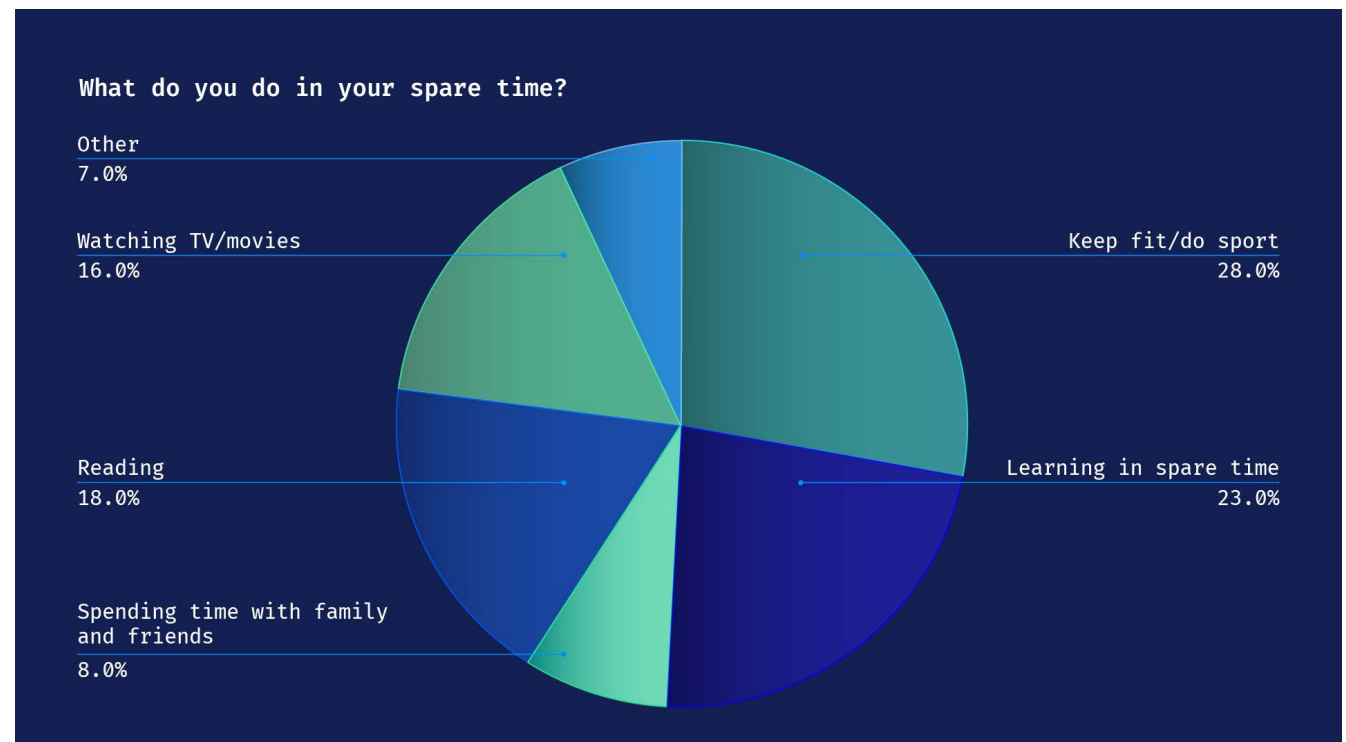
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Perks and benefits

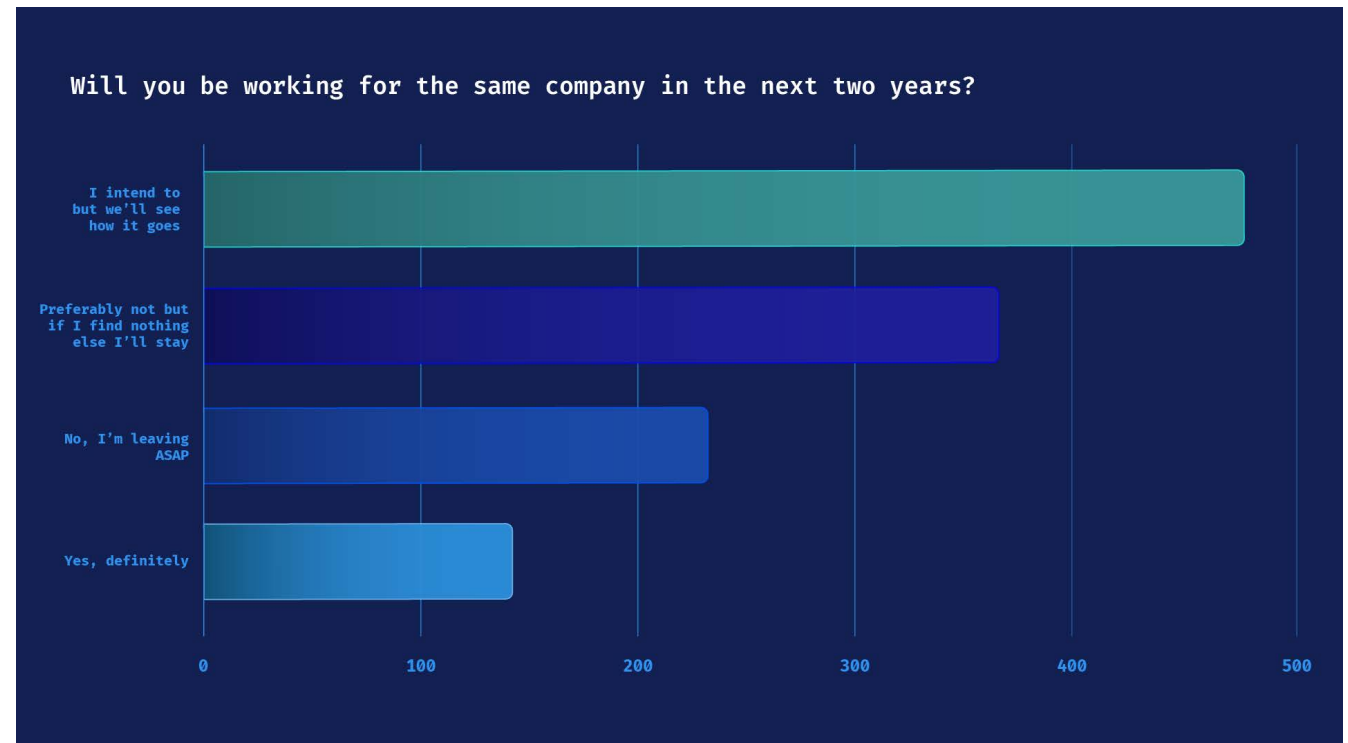
In 2021, we predicted that the perks and benefits offered to tech talent would have to change to keep up with a Post-Covid world. At a time when working from home became the norm – or at least more widely accepted throughout a company – traditional advantages such as cycle-to-work schemes, or pizza and beer socials quickly became outdated or unnecessary to the climate at that time.



In 2023, tech talent have expanded their ideas of what perks truly matter to them. Whilst overwhelmingly new ways of working such as flexible working and remote working have truly captured the attention of employees, organisations can invest their efforts in furthering the work/life balance of their employees. From the chart above, it is clear that learning and keeping fit are important to technical talent, so offering perks in line with this such as running clubs, company-wide ‘lunch and learns’ and subsidised movie vouchers could help to set you apart from the rest.

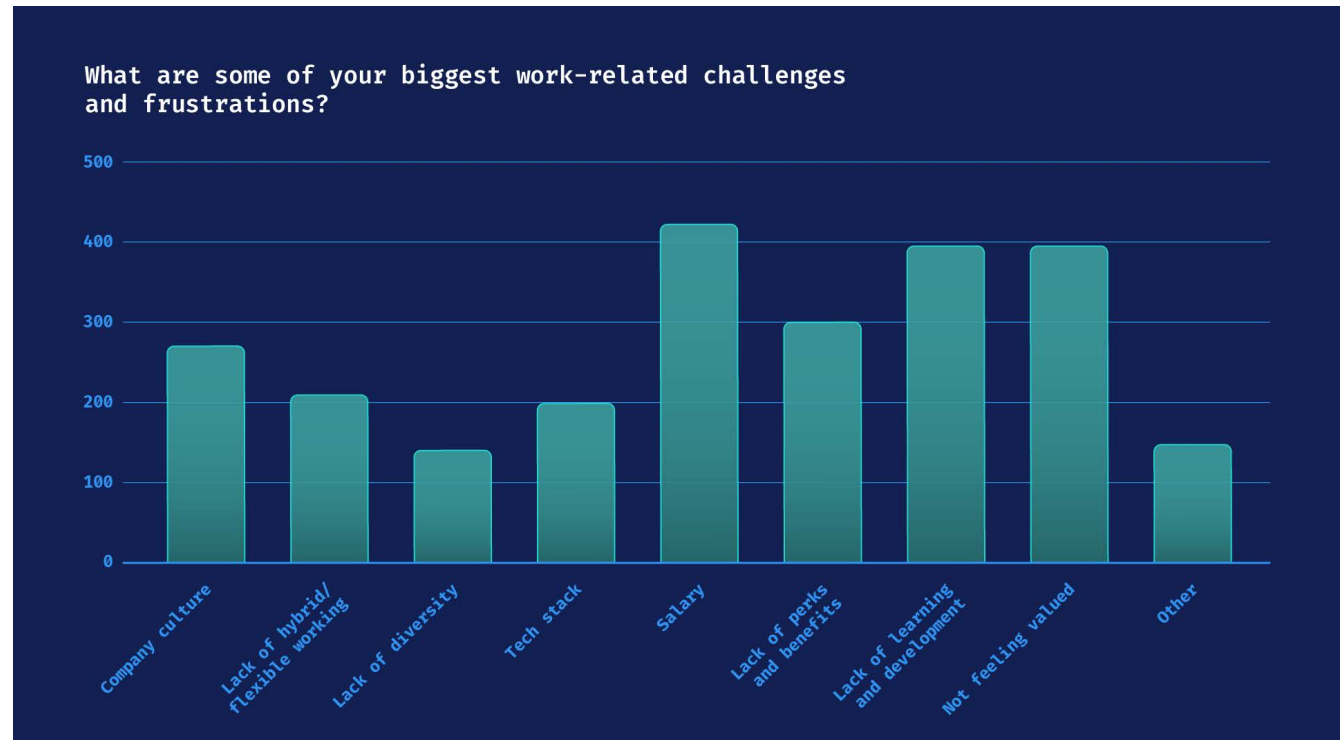
What makes tech talent leave a role

The tech layoffs that happened from late 2022 to early 2023 have left an indelible mark on the psyche of tech talent. Over ¾ of tech talent are unhappy with their roles and have looked for a new job in the past six months. It goes without saying that when an employee feels as though their contribution or company position is undervalued, they will start to look elsewhere.



It will be hard to sell the tech talent you currently have on any roadmaps, team strategy or organisation vision, unless you first provide a space where they feel safe to do their roles and explore other opportunities.

Biggest work challenges and frustrations



Some of the biggest challenges and frustrations at work for tech talent include the lack of perks and benefits and lack of learning and development opportunities. The majority of tech talent cited salary as the determining factor they would change in their role, with over 51% of respondents putting this first. As discussed previously, other factors include company culture, tech stack and location.

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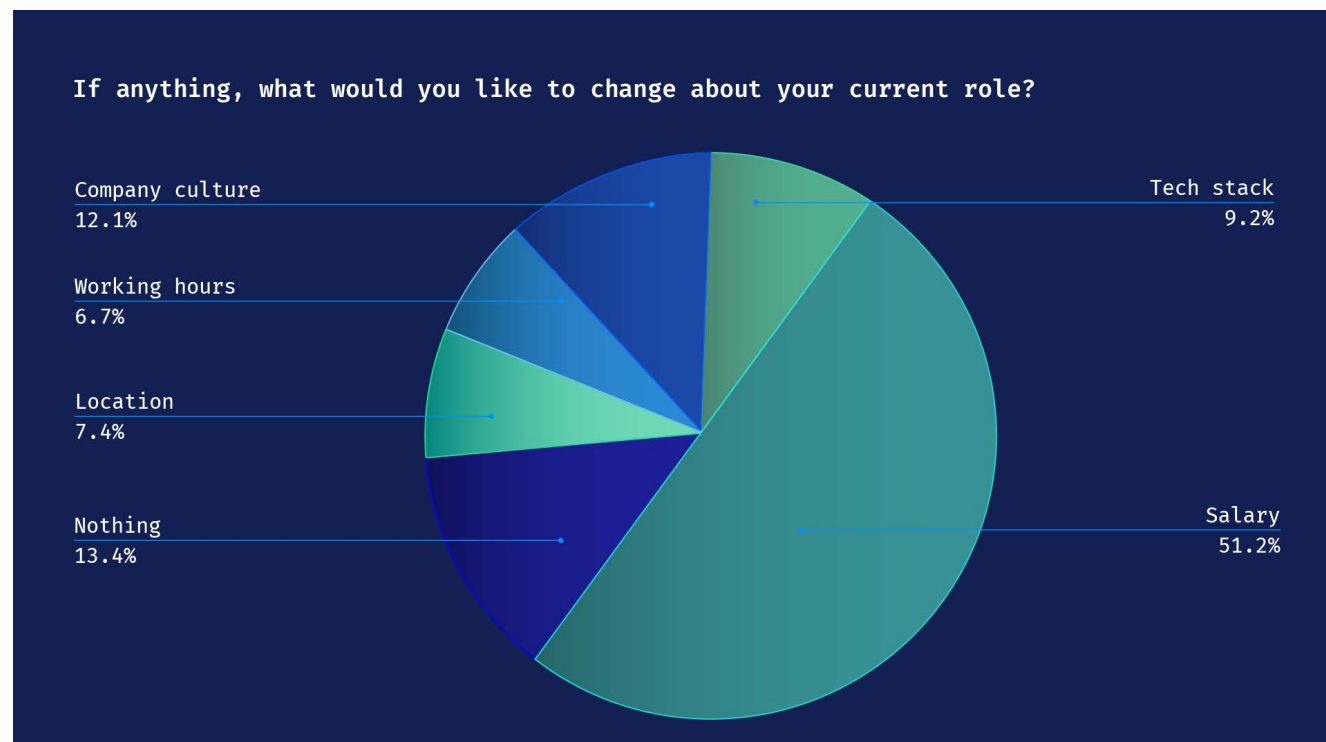
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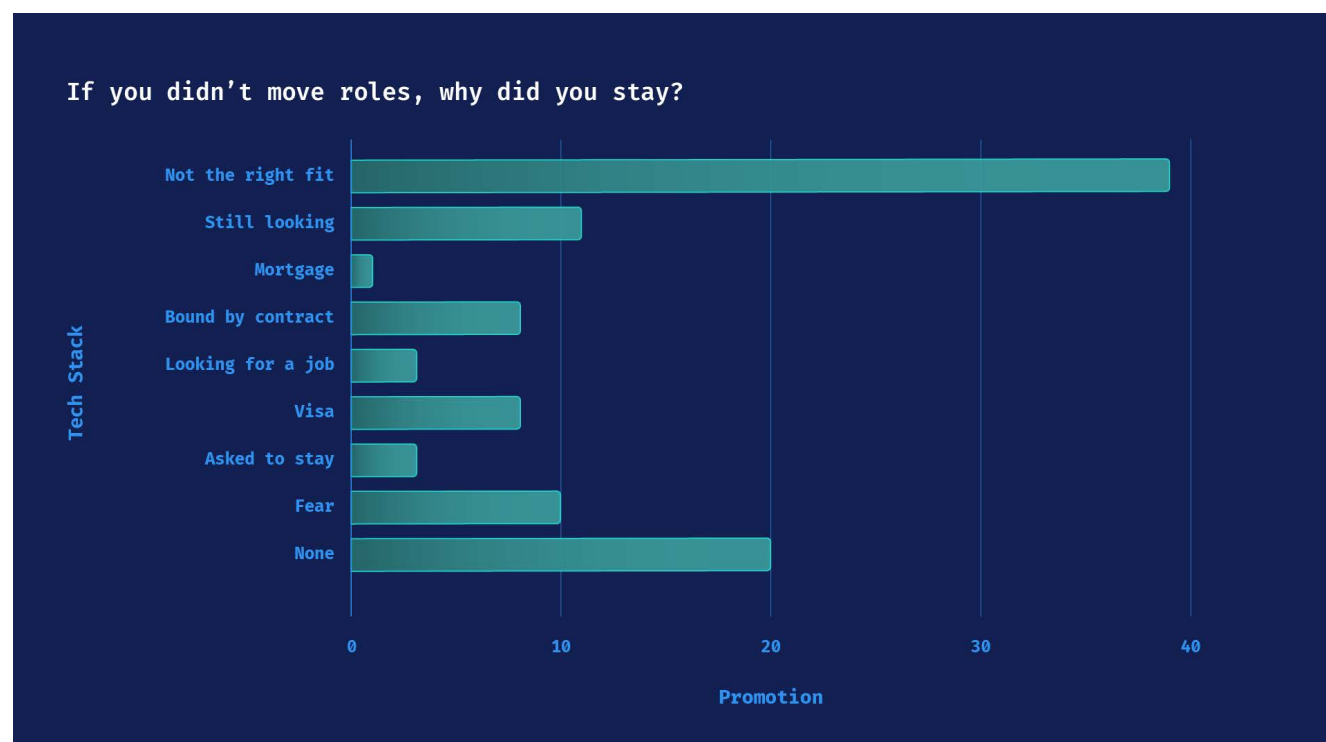
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On the other hand, tech talent are willing to wait for the right opportunity and won't abandon ship just because of salary. The current biggest reason for not moving roles is a mismatch between the new company and the tech talent, as well as general fear and queries around visa sponsorship.



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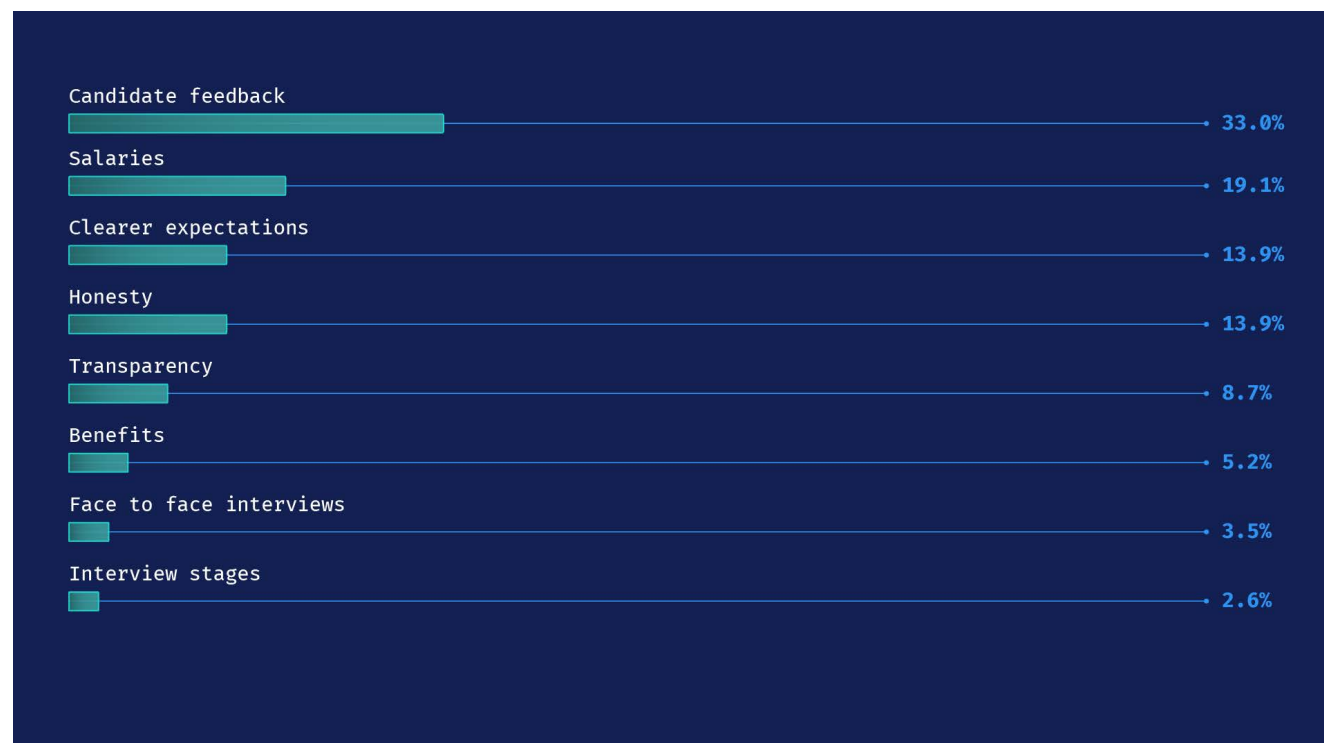
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How organisations can transform attrition rates



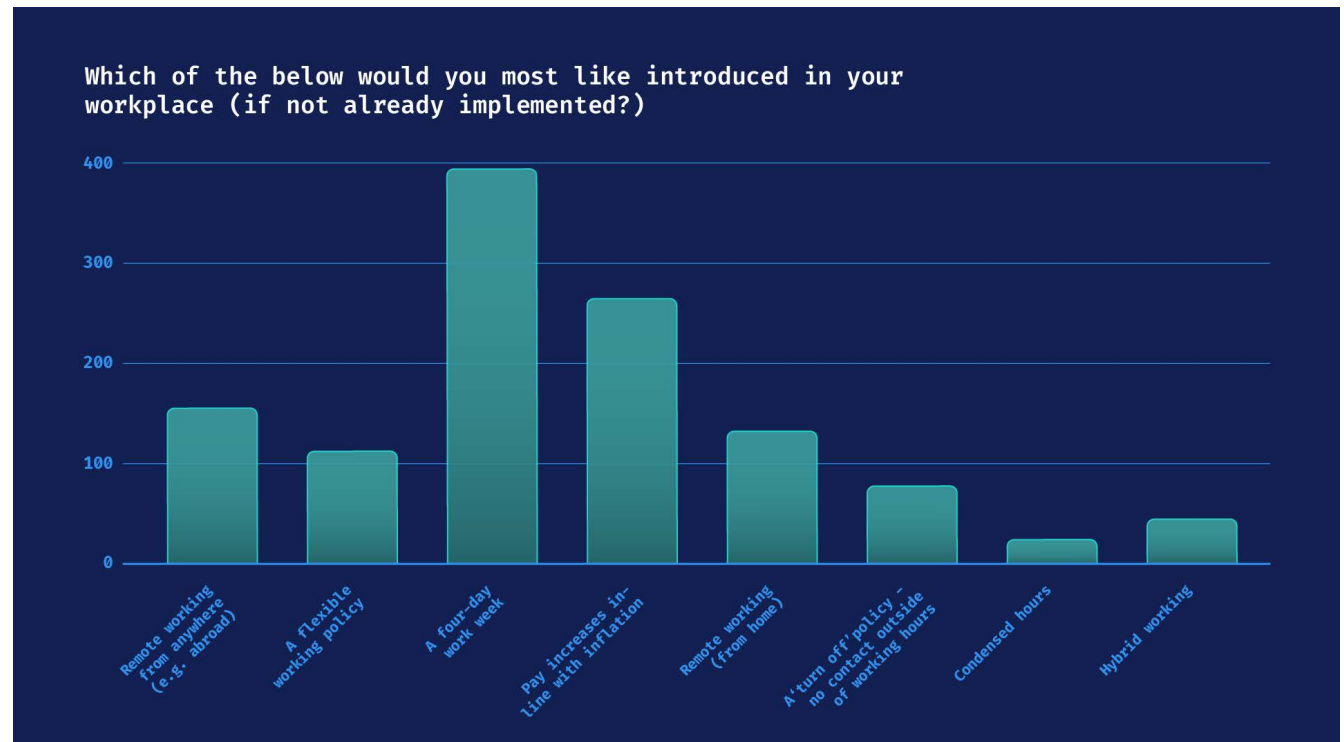
So how is it that organisations can change their internal processes to transform their attrition rates? Our top tip? Understanding how they can better engage with job seekers in general. Clarity and transparency around salaries will be an even bigger driving force for retaining talent, as well as clear progression plans and development opportunities. This can look like horizontal development instead of vertical, especially for tech talent that are not eager to go down the route of management.

Forecast for future trends

Whilst this report maintains as of 2023, there's a wealth of data to track imminent trends. Using our data from over 1000 people who responded to our survey, as well as data from the hackajob platform, there is still plenty to glean from what is to come, such as the rise in requests for a 4-day working week and the importance of employer branding.

The Case for the 4-Day Working Week

The 4-day working week has been a hot topic for the past few years and has undergone much scrutiny from employers and much applause from employees. Looking to the future, it is clear from the data that this movement will grow in popularity. Before considering whether or not this could work for your organisation, it is crucial to understand the reasons why it is so strongly desired by tech talent in 2023.



As we have already seen, new ways of working take precedence for tech talent and it may come as no surprise that the 4-day working week, itself a new way of working, is gaining momentum. It is a great example of a natural next step in the working-on-their-own-terms that we have seen already throughout this report.

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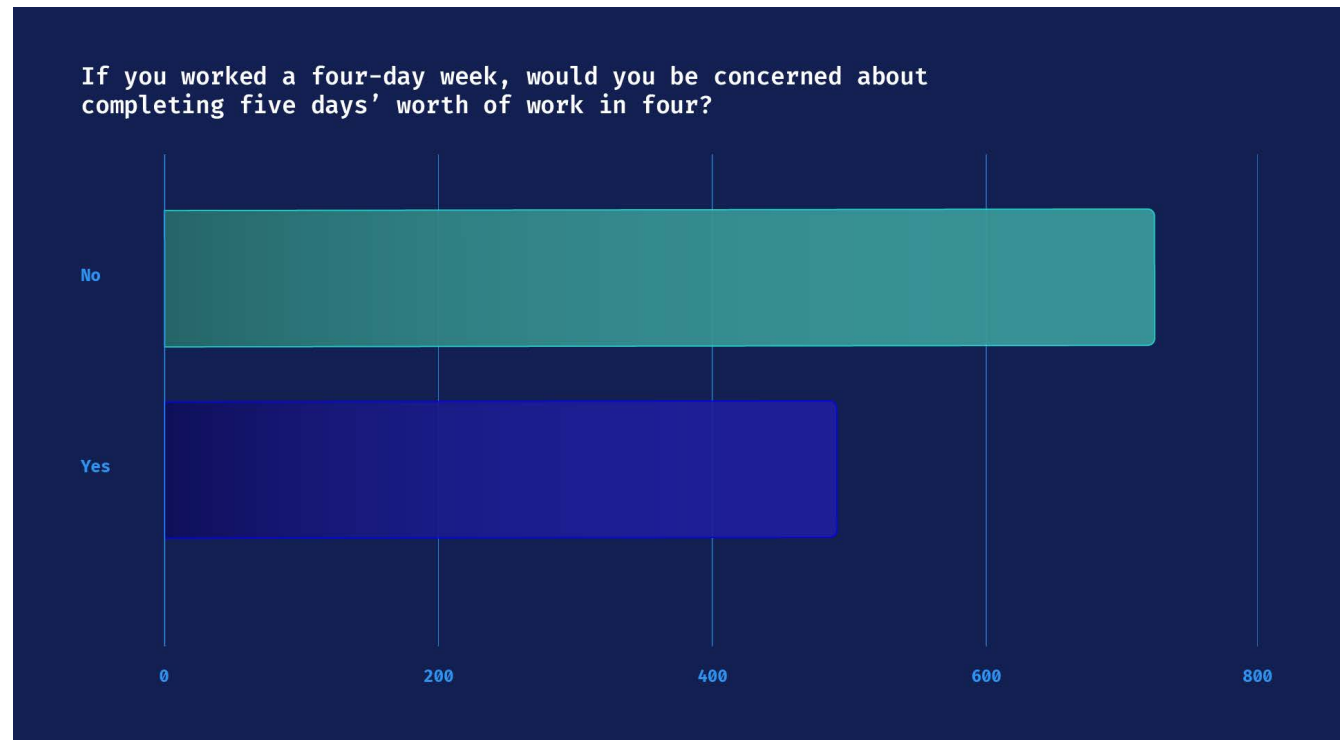
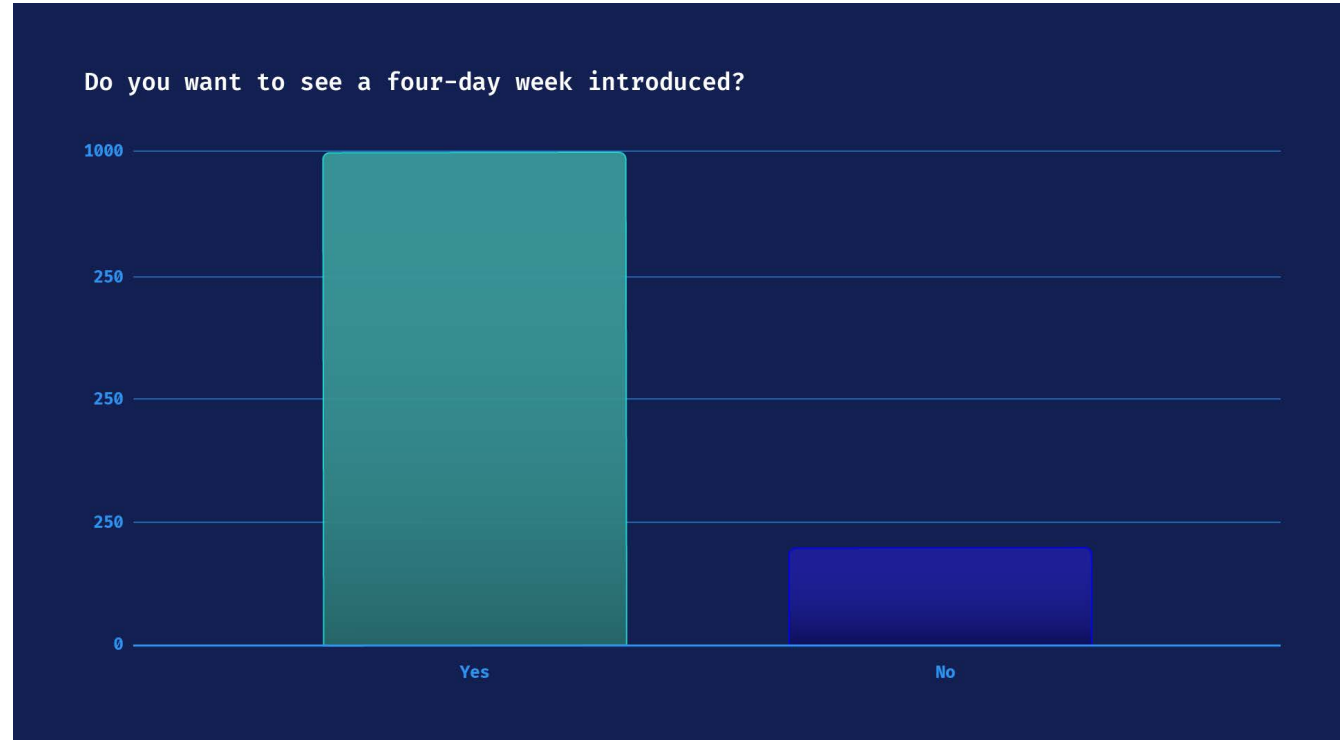
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Not only did 83% of tech talent want to see the four-day week introduced, but the majority were not phased by the idea of completing five days' worth of work in four.

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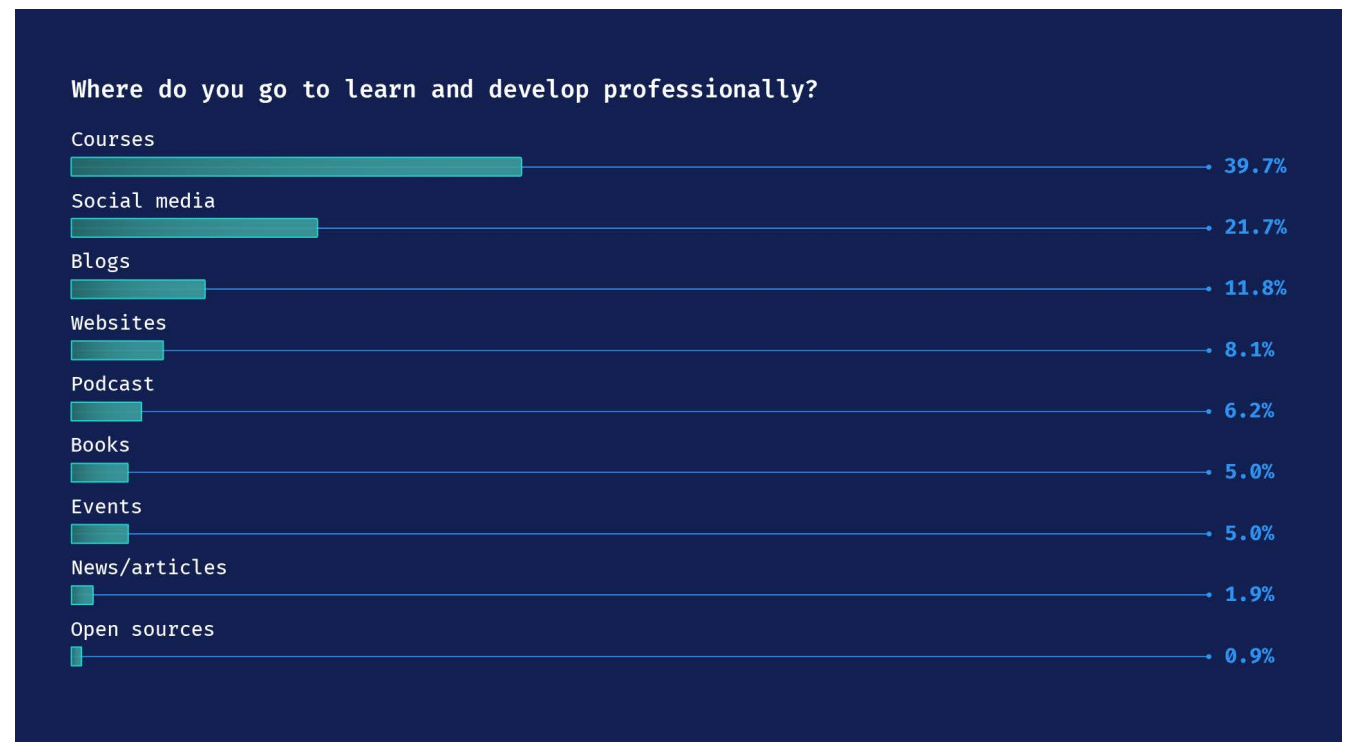
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If you are looking to have the edge over your competition whilst hiring tech talent, it is worth genuinely considering if this could be possible, if not now then at least some time in the future. This may also help your organisation to secure new status as forward-thinking business and will only add to your company's culture. A 4-day work week will not be feasible for every company depending on size and overall business needs, however, it is clear that the demand for this type of remuneration is not slowing down.

The Importance of Employer Branding

You're growing as a business and need a tech team to help deliver some really crucial products and strategies. Problem is, you're not necessarily known as a tech brand, so you struggle to position yourself in a growing market of those hiring tech talent. How do you make yourself stand out? First, you must understand where tech talent go to develop themselves, and what they are looking for in a company. hackajob's CEO, Mark Chaffey, says that in the future every company will become a tech company.



Next, it is important to unpick exactly how you can improve your employer branding to reach the right people. If almost 40% of tech talent use courses to upskill, you can think about including this in your benefits package or offering a stipend for this. Similarly, if tech talent use blogs and podcasts as a means to develop, it will also be important for you to have a presence in these spheres. As every company becomes a tech company and increasingly selects from the same talent pool, the difference between you and your competitors is the strength of your employer brand.

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Conclusion

The wants and needs of technical talent from 2021 to 2023 have drastically changed, and with good reason.

As the economy, job climate and salaries change, so too have the desires of those in the industry. A growing sense of freedom and working on their own terms is of the utmost importance to this group in the near future and it will be crucial for organisations actively hiring tech talent to bear this in mind.

Whether introducing a 4-day working week, improving the strength of your employer brand, or making steps towards positively influencing your overall company culture, there are plenty of ways for organisations to put their best foot forward and make their mark in the world of tech.

Methodology

hackajob

The data that this report is based on was gathered and analysed by hackajob using figures from our Engineering 2023 Survey.

We received over 1,000 responses from technical talent to understand what attracts and retains them as well as what aspects of their roles are most important to them. Technical talent includes, but is not limited to, Software Developers, Engineers, Data Scientists, QA Testers, Data Analysts, UI/UX designers, Product Managers and more.

