6.5 Ways To Find The Perfect IT Consultant

The One With The Right Skills And The Best Fit For Your Company

If you're looking to hire an IT consultant, you want to do it right … the first time around. Whether you need an expert for a short-term project or you're looking for a consultant who will be a long-term addition to your staff, there are certain things you need to do to ensure efficiency and success.

Put a stop to endless interviews and put a cap on relentless recruiting costs. It's time to stop the ongoing cycle of "search, replace and repeat" and transform shortsighted, quick fix thinking into strategic solutions that stick.

Follow these 6.5 steps to find that perfect IT consultant, the one with the right skills for the job and the best fit for your company's culture.

1 THE PERFECT CONSULTANT

Before you start the search, you have to know what you're searching for. Outline your ideal candidate, that has-it-all tech consultant that you'd love to have on your team. Write down the job skills, experience, and hard and soft skills that make up this candidate. Include personality and location preferences, if necessary. Then determine your budget, estimate the scope of the project or engagement, and translate the budget into a target rate.

For a perfect example of what you need to include in the specification, check **www.aavalar.com/find-full-time-tech-experts**

2 ADVERTISING THE OPPORTUNITY

Brainstorm your advertising strategy – how and where you'll get the word out about your employment opportunity so that perfect consultant can read or hear about it. This includes posting updates on job boards, special interest groups, established network groups, industry events, looking for referrals and even asking friends and family who may know someone for the job. Sometimes, the best solutions come from the most unlikely sources, so keep an open mind and don't limit your options.

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3 MANAGING CANDIDATE FLOW

Prepare for an influx of resumes ahead of time so you're not overwhelmed if this overflow does, in fact, occur. Use a database and a commitment to organization to catalog and rank each one. Make a habit of cataloging and ranking as soon as you read the resume so the details and its impression on you are fresh in your mind. This way, you won't have to go back and re-read resumes and cover letters that you've forgotten or, even worse, confuse two candidates and follow up with the wrong one!

Any system is probably better than no system at all, and there are plenty of expensive and complicated ones on the market such as Taleo, iCims, Field Glass, etc. However, there are also some open source products that might be worth a look. Check these out:

- ANTS
- **Open Applicant**
- **OpenCATS**

4 YOUR INTERVIEW LINEUP

Determine who will be involved in the interviewing process. Make sure the interviewers are aware that it can be a very time-consuming process and are willing to commit.

5 TEST AND TRIAL: SEE THE SKILLS

What questions will you and your team ask during interviews? Make sure that each individual has a consistent interview approach. Remember, most people were never taught how to interview, so they wing it. For a primer/refresher on how to conduct a technical interview, check out Aavalar Consulting's "Power Recruiting for IT and Computer Engineering Pros" MP3.

Will you require a test, project or presentation to assess what the candidate has to offer in a live, real-world setting? Some type of assessment or examination should be implemented so you get a taste of what each potential consultant is *really* like – beyond the words listed under "skills" on their resumes.

Assessments can be technical, such as ProveIT or BrainBench. They can also provide insight into the individual's personality profile like DiSC or Myers Briggs. Believe it or not there is even an assessment from a company called **The Gabriel Institute** that measures how effective an individual will be as a team player. They call it "Teamability".

6 SMART SCREENING

You want to have a wealth of candidates to choose from, so don't screen too harshly at first. Here's a general rule to follow: Out of a hundred plus resumes, you should narrow the group down to a short list of about 14 to 20 key word matched resumes. Then have some sort of initial phone conversation with all of them to establish basic fit in terms of compensation, geographic proximity, domain experience, etc. Out of that group, do at least seven technical phone interviews from which you should pick three or four to do in-person interviews with. You may be able to find the successful candidate out of the final group of three or four, but if you don't, the whole process begins again.

6.5 MEASURE & ASSESS: WAS IT WORTH IT?

It's important to track the time and resources needed to complete the recruitment process. Was it worth it for your team and your company to keep the search internal? If the cost cuts into your business' profitability or productivity, consider outsourcing to an IT consulting company. Not only will you save time and resources, but you'll also tap into the many advantages of expert IT consulting services.

The quality of your IT consultant is reflective of the quality of your recruitment process. So whether you keep it internal or choose to outsource, make sure the process meets your needs based on quantitative analysis.

To learn more about Aavalar Consulting's dedication to finding that perfect consultant for your company with the right skills and the best fit, visit **Aavalar online** or call **610.889.9990** to speak to one of our Resourcing Strategists. Good luck with your search!