How to Hire the Best Developers

The amateur juggler sits nervously at the dimly lit desk, knowing full well that his clumsy, shaking hands might at any moment knock the candle over, and set the whole tent office ablaze. *Breathe*, he tells himself. *Get it together*.

Across the table, the circus director looks over at the strapping young man before him and quickly gathers his notes for the standard interview questions.

"Ok, Mr… *Beansley*, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you juggle more than three items at once?" the director asks, patiently scanning the candidate from behind his tiny, round spectacles.

Phew. He won't have to lie for this one.

"Oh, yes, sir. Of course. I can juggle up to seven objects at once! I've been asked to perform at schools, birthday parties, talent sh—"

"Good, good" the director cuts him off. "And do you work with knives or anything of the sort?"

He gently pulls down his sleeves to hide the wound from when he nearly chopped off his finger last night, before gracefully managing to say "sharp objects are my speciality! I've been practising since I was six."

"Excellent! And how are you with flaming objects?"

Blast. This is it. He gulps down now, as he cannot seem to shake the image of the entire circus on fire from his head. *Steady…*

"I'm like a dragon!" he finally blurts out, ferociously nodding as he does. "Or… *a phoenix*. Anything to do with fire, Mr. Barnum, I've got you covered."

"Right, then!" Mr. Barnum gets up, smiles and tightly shakes the amateur's hand. "You're hired. I shall see you on Monday morning."

"But sir!" the man belts out, as the director is halfway out the door — *"I haven't even shown you my juggling!"*

A Universal Problem

Believe it or not, the sort of interaction depicted above not only is common in job interviews across the globe, but is particularly prevalent in software circles. For this reason, SPG would now like to introduce a few simple, but highly effective suggestions to assess potential vendors and bring aboard the best possible developers.

1. Evaluate portfolios
Like a picture worth a thousand words, a portfolio will always have a lot more to say about a team's collective abilities than a job interview could ever convey. For this reason, when hiring, we recommend taking a good, hard look at every candidate's body of work.

On that note, by the way, a series of small, consistent projects tends to be far more significant than a single major achievement, as this will usually indicate greater knowledge, cases, experience and overall speed of development.

To simplify things, as a rule of thumb, if a team's portfolio has a minimum of 3 to 5 projects *individually implemented over a period of two years,* then you are likely to be fishing in promising waters.

2. Check Github accounts

As the largest host of source code in the world, odds are that at least a few of your potential hires will have already uploaded their projects to Github. Thus, we recommend requesting from developers a link to their joint or personal Github accounts, as this will serve as an accurate representation of your team's individual capabilities.

3. Request code snippets

Though many projects are protected by non-disclosure agreements, you can always ask vendors to provide your company with a selection of insightful code snippets. These may then be evaluated by a technical specialist who should be able to let you know if the team lives up to your standards.

Some Other Fallacies

Unfortunately, however, a lack of focus on results is not the only thing standing in the way of more sensible hiring procedures.

1. Hourly rates

Customers are often tempted to compare providers by focusing solely on their hourly rates — but this is wrong on a number of levels. Imagine, for instance, that a team charges £60 an hour while its main competitor provides the same services at an hourly rate of just £40. Though it may seem obvious that one should always go for the lowest price tag on display, this is actually significantly more complex.

In addition to dealing with a global market with enormous technical differences and wildly varying rates, perhaps the team that is charging more will be equipped with superior performance. This easily would lead to better results, and could probably save you money in the long run.

At the same time, a less expensive but *equally less experienced* team will likely generate a lot of technical debt, and as a result, slow down development.

2. English fluency ≠ Intelligence

Yet another mistake is candidates are often evaluated based on their English. But a programming *language* is called that for a reason, and one's native tongue has nothing to do with the quality of one's code.

In fact, suboptimal English is more than made up for by the sheer robustness of the final application. So while communication skills are undoubtedly a must, never assume that a team of Shakespearean volubility will somehow perform better than foreign developers.

The Show Must Go On

In the end, however, as we hope this article has made clear, *actions speak louder than words* — so moving forward, make sure you don't behave like that circus director!

Instead, by following Software Planet Group's simple recommendations, you can turn your attention towards palpable results and guarantee the applause that your product deserves.