



How To Hire Developers

Building an employer brand to attract the best tech talent

Every company is a technology company now - and that's the challenge

Whether you are a traditional corporate, a retailer, a bank, or an engineering firm – the fact is that virtually every business is a technology company now. Across the full spectrum of sectors, organisations are having to move fast to transform their business, to develop their products and services, and deliver them digitally and on mobile. There's only one problem – the competition for developer talent is getting fiercer.

Of course, if you are a developer this is great news. If you are trying to recruit tech talent though, it means you have to work a lot harder to stand out in the candidate market. For employers, hiring good developer talent is quickly becoming a major

strategic challenge.


Indeed, a survey by Tech City UK claimed that over 50% of the UK's digital tech community highlighted a shortage of highly skilled employees as a challenge for their business – nearly 25% of the respondents described sourcing talent as a 'major challenge'.

There is huge pressure to recruit the best, highly sought-after digital talent to develop new business models and customer experiences.

But it's much harder to attract the best if you're not Google or Facebook. And the less your business resembles the internet titans – the more 'traditional' your business – the harder it is.

This means that many businesses are having to do something they have simply never had to do before – build a technology-focused employer brand. Rather than communicating your brand to customers, this is all about communicating your reputation as a place to work, and your value as an organisation to current and potential developers.

This is a significant challenge. How do you communicate your corporate proposition to a distinctly non-corporate audience? What are you offering this talent? How does your business present a more compelling opportunity than the most exciting start-ups or your competitors?



This isn't just an HR problem, it's an issue that cuts across the whole business. To realise your tech transformation and digital ambitions you need to be able to communicate to developers authentically, from your senior leadership to your teams on the frontline.

To help deal with these challenges we have asked the people that matter – the developers.

Using that research, this report offers unique insights into what motivates and appeals to developers when they are choosing new roles, what you can do to differentiate your brand, and ultimately compete in the battle for tech talent more effectively.

Free pizza isn't a recruitment strategy

The likes of Google and “cool” start ups have very successfully perpetuated an image of what developers want, and what it looks like to work at a tech company. You already know the clichés - meeting rooms full of

by nothing more than free pizza, and offices stuffed to the gills with foosball tables.

So that's what you should do to get the talent you need, right?



bean bags and hammocks, all-night coding sessions fuelled

The short answer? Probably not. Our research actually showed

that for a significant proportion of developers these clichés are a big turn off in a prospective employer. Indeed, more traditional businesses who try to emulate these clichés within a corporate culture can come off looking out of touch and desperate.

Developers don't just want free pizza. They take their professional development seriously and care about their careers as with any other profession – as our research shows.

The majority (51%) of the developers we surveyed said they would rather have coaching than ‘perks’.

This desire to improve their skills, learn new languages and challenge

themselves is too often neglected when it comes to recruitment strategies. Rather than playing up to the stereotypes, brands should be putting this at the heart of their recruitment pitch.

If you're not offering what developers want, you'll never secure the talent your business needs.



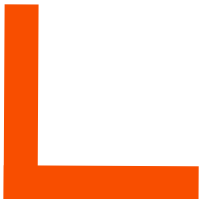
Of developers agreed with the statement:
Free pizza isn't a benefit



Of developers said 'quirky' breakout areas are naff



Of developers said having a table tennis table in the office doesn't make you cool



So what are developers looking for in an employer?

When we asked developers explicitly what would attract them to a potential employer, this desire for professional development came through loud and clear again. The two highest ranking factors were working on challenging projects and working with the best colleagues too.

But our findings show that there is also a deeper level of connection that developers crave. Nearly one in two developers said they want an employer to offer a vibrant, supportive culture.

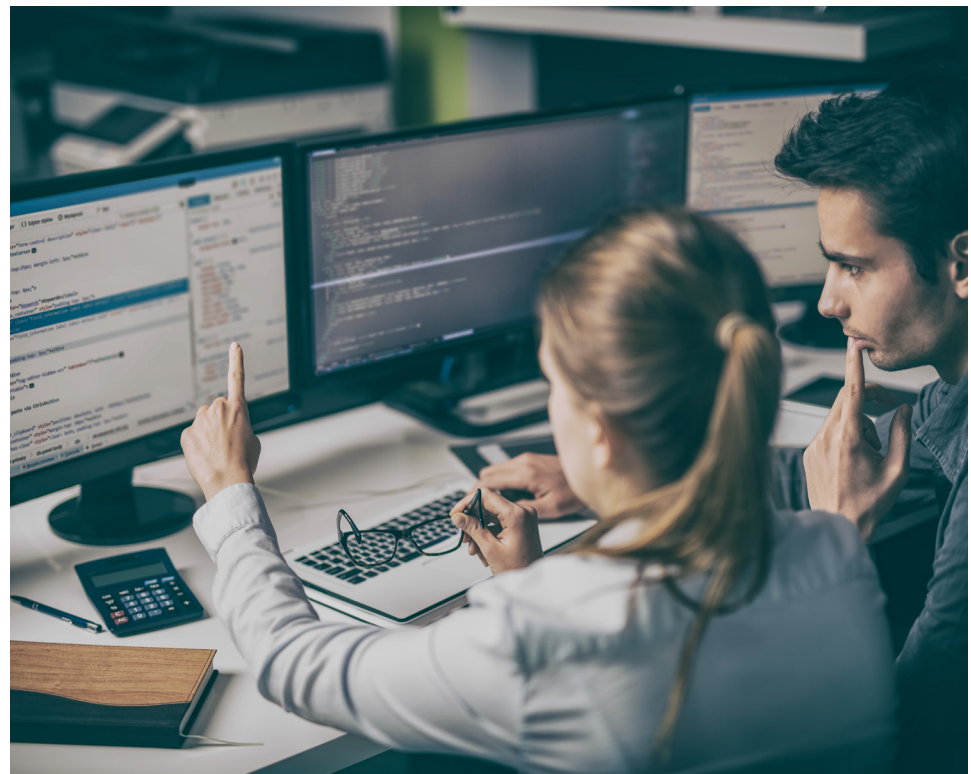
At the same time, we can also discern a desire to be part of something more and to feel like they are making a contribution. Significant numbers of developers singled out

the vision of the CEO or the CTO of an organisation as a key reason for applying for a role.

These factors point to a need for many developers to 'buy into' an organisation. Creating an organisation that developers can invest in

emotionally is at the heart of building an employer brand. But doing this authentically takes effort and is too often forgotten in the race to attract talent.

Don't be tempted to throw a few bean bags around and get a corporate account with Deliveroo



and assume that's job done – without anchoring those perks in something deeper your efforts will fall flat.

Developers are not satisfied in their comfort zone – you need to show them what's in it for them.

46%

A vibrant and supportive culture in the office

29%

The vision and leadership of the CEO

20%

The vision and leadership of the CTO / tech lead

56%

Working on cutting-edge, challenging projects

20%

The vision and leadership of your direct team / project lead

48%

Working with highly skilled colleagues

5%

Working for a big brand

What attributes attract you most to a potential employer? (%)

Getting your brand on the right channels

Developers are doing huge amounts of research into your brand when they are considering a position – and that research goes over a wide variety of channels.

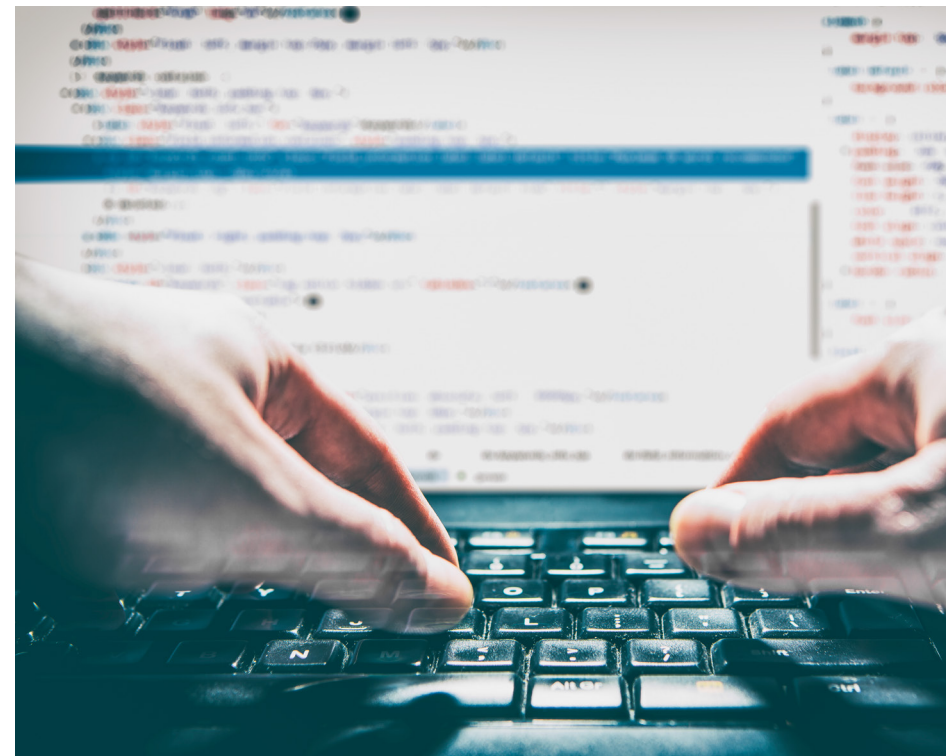
take to improve their presence on almost all of these channels.

The significance of your website cannot be underestimated. As much as it is a channel for your customers and sales, you

website. This is often the first port of call for candidates so you need to make the information that is relevant to them visible and easy to access.

For some brands having a completely distinct online presence, dedicated to recruitment efforts might be necessary. Of course, this can also be achieved through social channels – LinkedIn is the clear number one for developers.

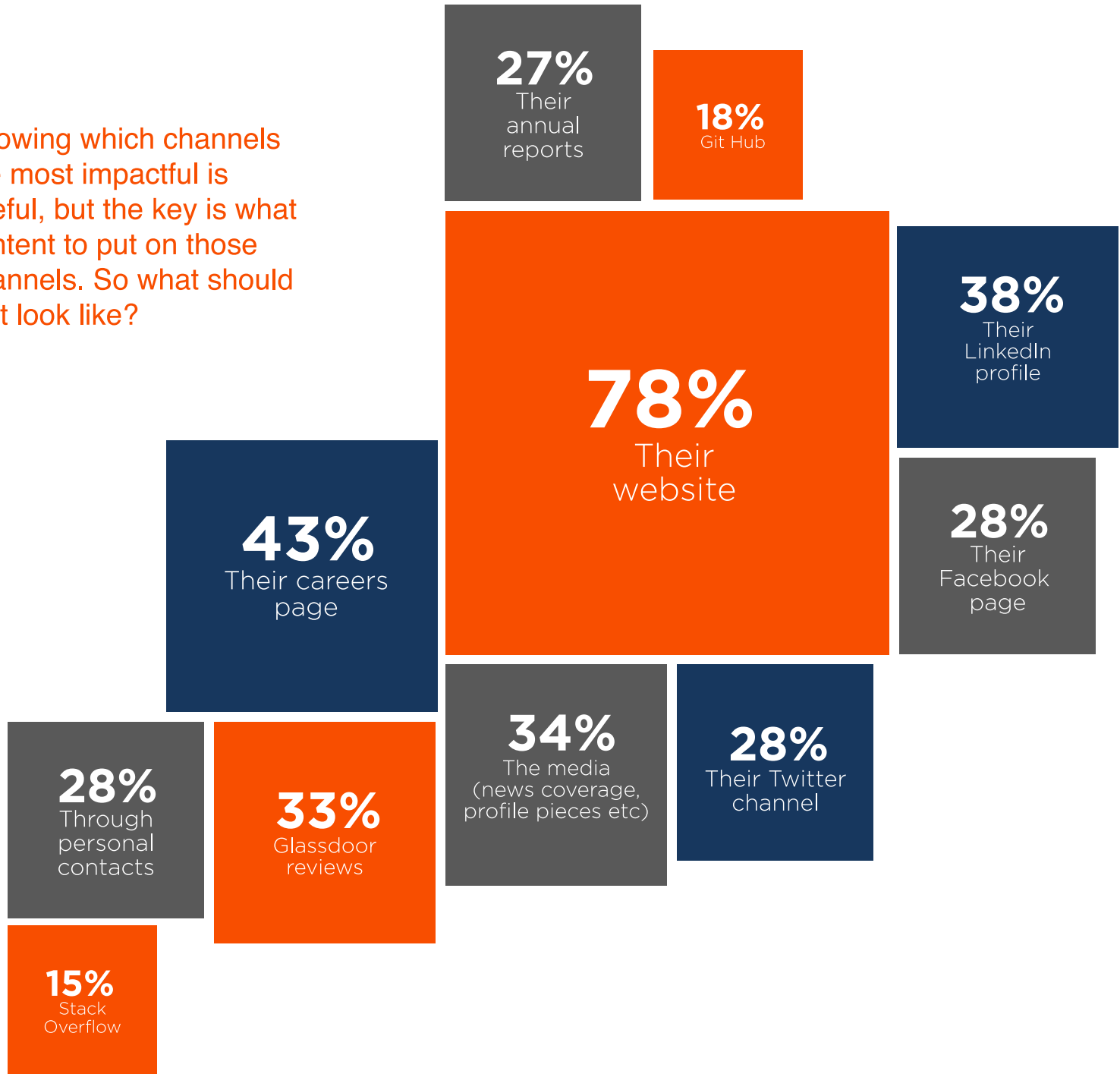
Given the power of owned and social channels, it is perhaps surprising that the traditional media is still a channel that developers rely on – but over a third of developers are using it to research potential employers.



The positive thing for employers is that there are clear steps they can

should not ignore potential recruits as an audience for your

Knowing which channels are most impactful is useful, but the key is what content to put on those channels. So what should that look like?



When considering a job opportunity, how do you research the company? (%)

The right content

Our research shows that developers are looking for specific things about a potential employer.

Unsurprisingly, given their desire to work on challenging projects, they are looking for examples of a brand's work.

More importantly they look for insights into the culture.

That's both in a general sense of what the team is like, but also specifics in terms of how your teams operate - are you fully agile? Do you work in sprints? How quickly will they get to see their code live on your platform?

The overall health of your business is important to developers. It can be challenging to be completely open about



your financials, but developers are looking for reassurance about their job security and prospects – don't make any claims you can't support. This also applies in terms of the ambition and direction of the company.

This is where spokespeople are vital.

Every piece of content should put a face to the company and that means you can't rely on your CEO to do all the heavy lifting.

For a recruitment campaign to be most effective you need a team of spokespeople that can talk at different levels. That could be the CTO or

it might mean a specific project lead. You might also shine a spotlight on one of your current developers as a business ambassador.

74%

Insights into the company's working culture

43%

Profiles of key spokespeople (CEO, CTO etc)

74%

Examples of the company's tech capabilities and work

54%

Evidence of the company's financial health

46%

Descriptions of the company's overarching mission and vision

When researching a company's media presence, what sort of information are you looking for? (%)

Getting the most out of your recruiter



A key piece of the puzzle is your recruiter. Whether internal or external, they are a vital part of the process for you and the employees you are targeting.

Indeed, over three quarters (76.5%) of developers say the recruiter is important when it comes to

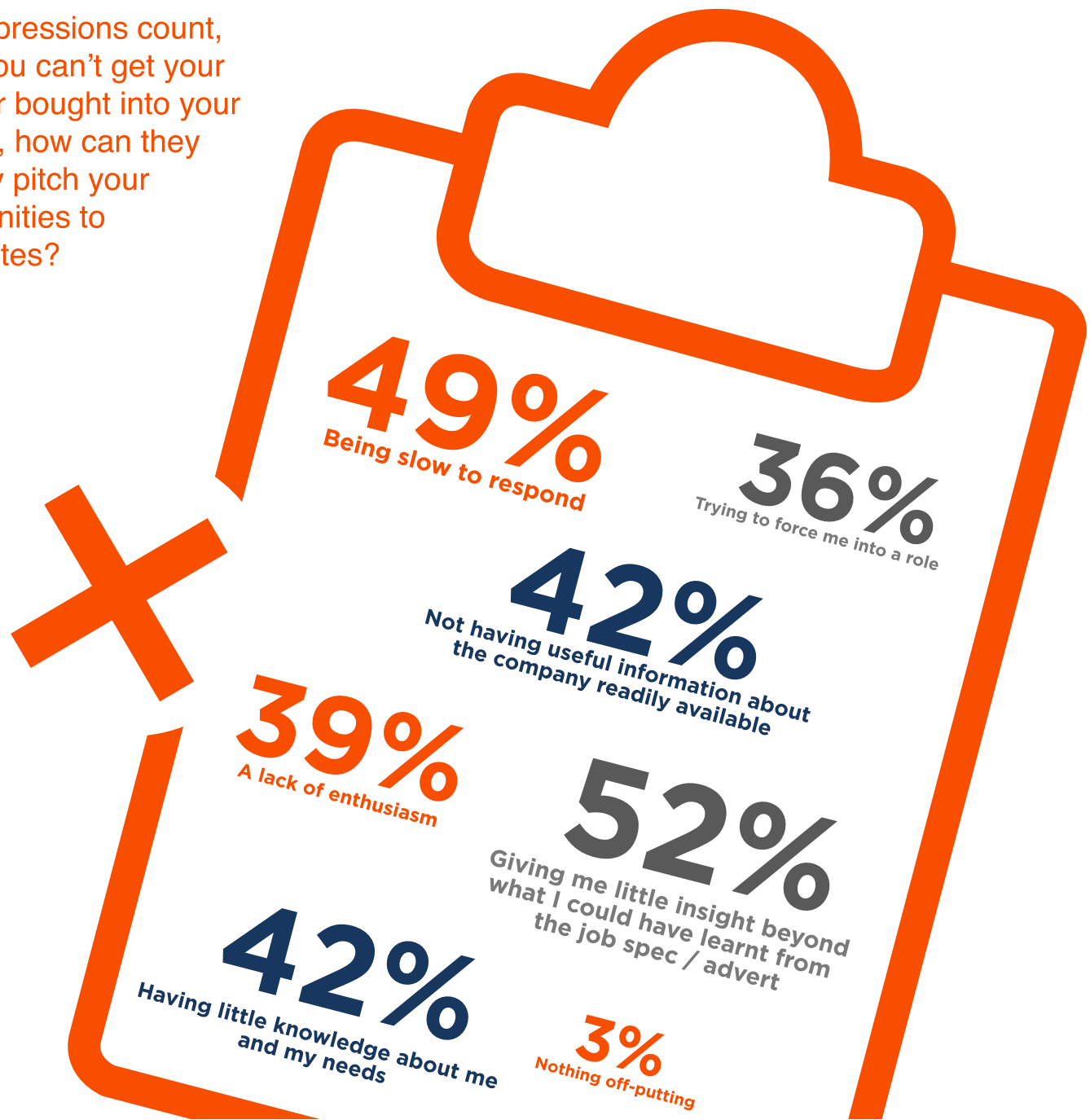
considering a new role. However, the way brands integrate recruiters into their hiring strategies is regularly lacking. Too often recruiters are slow to respond to prospective hires, they don't have the right information to hand, or they can offer candidates little or no insight into the role they are applying for.

For developers these are all big turn offs when it comes to deciding where to move next.

Luckily these are all entirely fixable problems – it just means taking a little extra care to integrate the recruiter into your wider hiring strategy.

Organisations should provide their recruiters with a thorough brief on their employer brand and they should run immersion sessions to enable the recruiter to understand your culture and employee experience. Recruiters are most often the first point of contact between the candidate and your business, they need to be able to present your brand in the very best light.

First impressions count, and if you can't get your recruiter bought into your mission, how can they possibly pitch your opportunities to candidates?



What recruiters do badly (%)

So what can Wildfire do for you?

For traditionally 'non-tech' brands, attracting the best tech talent can seem like an impossible task.

However, quite often the challenge is that these companies are simply not used to talking about innovation and technology, or they don't even realise they have an interesting story to tell.

Even tech-based companies can struggle with articulating their story when it comes to using PR to support recruitment. In the case of B2C brands with enormous consumer PR and marketing programmes running above and below the line, do they even see the benefits in promoting exactly what the brand is doing to future-proof the business and transform customer experiences?

Even if they do, they rarely have the contacts, experience or the time to do so.

That's where Wildfire can help. We have experience of working closely with a cross section of brand stakeholders to craft a narrative and stories that build technology credentials across multiple channels and audiences, from employees to consumers, partners and investors.

Our three-tiered approach enables us to create the content you need to showcase your work and culture, manage the channels that developers are using to research you, and develop your own brand advocates. In partnership with our specialist technology recruitment partner,

Dome Recruitment, we can also undertake full internal and external audits of your recruitment processes to help highlight specific strengths and weaknesses.

Top Down

Build a brand

Be known for something

Articulate your leadership vision

Be visible in tech publications and the tech community

Inside Out

Build employee advocates

Promote your culture

Incentivise sharing

Bottom Up

Audit your recruitment journey

Integrate your recruiter with the business

Optomise your recruitment 'touchpoints'

If you've got the job of establishing your company as a leader in innovation, and one that aims to stay at the forefront of your industry by embracing technology, then please get in touch.

We'd love to talk to you about telling your innovation story and helping build and promote an environment that is highly attractive to the best tech talent on the market.

Debby Penton
Managing Director
debbyp@wildfirepr.com
020 8408 8000

wildfire 

DOME
RECRUITMENT

