



# Tech Talent Compensation

Singapore 2021/2022

Verified compensation data of Software Engineers & other technology talents. Analysis of top paying companies.



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# Executive Summary

Since our founding in 2018, we have spoken to many companies and tech talents. The recurring topic that we always circled back to was how the existing solutions and reports were insufficient despite the abundance of data. They could not accurately capture the nuances of the tech industry, one where the 90th percentile of software engineers are paid as much as 3x more than those in the 10th percentile.

Recognizing this unsolved pain point in the tech communities, we performed an in-depth analysis into the crucial issues of tech talent compensation in the region – in partnership with the top venture capital firm in Asia, Quest Ventures.

By analyzing over 30,000 salary data points, we launched our first Tech Talent Compensation report to share a detailed breakdown of how tech talents are paid across the different domains, ranging from Software Engineering to Data Engineering, Quality Assurance and more. As a result, we discovered various valuable insights. The war for tech talent has driven up salaries to an all-time high - average salaries of software engineers increased by up to 32% in 2021 alone.

The report is not the same as the annual compensation reports by the traditional recruitment firms. As a company that prides itself on being "For Engineers, by Engineers", we understand that the usual salary bands provided are not very useful. An overly simplified minimum and maximum range of \$7,000 to \$21,000 is too broad and not actionable, so we included the salary data at the various percentiles.

With the strong competition for tech talents, we set out to uncover the 15 most searched companies, and unveil the reasons so that companies can emulate their strategy for attracting talents, both on the compensation and non-compensation front.

And as the talent war continues to intensify, companies should be prepared to face shorter average tenures and higher turnover rates amongst employees. Engineering leaders know that talent churn is more than a one-off recruitment cost but a much more expensive process of offboarding and onboarding members with minimal disruption to the engineering roadmap.

As such, beside focusing on how companies can attract and recruit talents better, we also want to equip companies with the knowledge to gear up their end-to-end talent management process. These include areas often neglected by companies, such as talent development and retention. We got on the ground to interview experienced engineering leaders from companies of various sizes to learn how they perceive and approach these areas.

We hope you find the report useful, and welcome your feedback and thoughts.



# Foreword

Tech talent compensation in Singapore increased 22% year-on-year in 2021. The massive demand for tech talent is fueled by the wave of venture capital into tech startups in the region and global tech companies setting up in Singapore, layered on top of a limited tech talent supply.

In 2018, Quest Ventures invested in NodeFlair's vision to build a solution for tech talent and businesses. Recognising the gravity of the global tech talent squeeze and its impact on Singapore and Asia, the team went on a mission to diagnose the pain points for tech talent and hiring entities. Salary is identified as the largest push and pull factor, and the reason responsible for failed job placement.

This report uncovers the tech talent salary black box and empowers tech talent and employers by analysing more than 30,000 data points from NodeFlair's proprietary database, and in-depth interviews with founders and engineering leaders.

Salary transparency is paramount to both tech talent and employers. It makes the hiring process more time-efficient and prevents unnecessary unhappiness resulting from misalignment in salary

expectations. Tech talent will also be more empowered in job interviews and compensation negotiations when they have access to up-to-date market salary benchmarks. Employers can further develop and finetune their human capital strategy and budget to be more competitive in their hiring process, increasing tech talent attraction, and improving retention. Beyond salary, the report also consolidated practical and actionable insights from founders and engineering leaders.

We congratulate NodeFlair on the release of this ambitious report.



# About



NodeFlair is Singapore #1 tech talent platform empowering talents to make smarter career decisions with data, not opinion. Founded in 2018, NodeFlair has evolved from a tech-enabled recruitment platform to a full-stack tech career platform with products for every step of their career.

Its compensation data are verified so talents can have ease of mind when embarking on their next job exploration.

[nodeflair.com](https://nodeflair.com) | For media query, email us at [press@nodeflair.com](mailto:press@nodeflair.com)



Quest Ventures is a top venture capital firm in Asia. Its portfolio of 100+ venture-backed companies operate in more than 150 cities across Asia, creating employment and advancement opportunities for more than 4,400 employees, while its Enterprise and ESG efforts directly impact thousands more.

[questventures.com](https://questventures.com)



We are grateful for the time, insights, and support offered by the founders, industry experts, and tech talents who contributed to the making of this report.

Special thanks to Damiano Tietto, Julius Uy, Alwyn Tan, Winston Teo, Ishan Agrawal, Gibson Tang, TeckChun Pang, Pavel Kudinov, Ashish Awasthi, Eddie Lau, Derrick Lee and their companies for spending time to share their experiences and expertises on the best practices when it comes to talent management.

# Methodology

## On Salary Data

Salary data for Singapore are derived from NodeFlair's proprietary database of over **30,000 data points** from companies of all sizes and industries. This includes user submissions **verified by documents** (payslips and offer letters) as well as job advertisements from various aggregated from various job portals for the year 2021.

Salary data for India and Indonesia are derived from over 5,300 data points from companies of all sizes and industries. These data are from job postings in these countries for the period of Q4 of 2021.

**Salary data is NOT provided by the industry experts and companies interviewed in the report.**

## On Interviews

In-depth interviews about the best talent management best practices with over 10 founders and engineering leaders. These leaders and companies are primarily in Singapore, but also with engineering footprints in other Asia countries such as India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and more.

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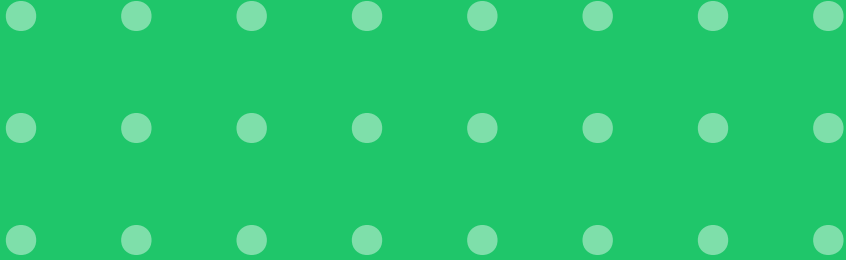
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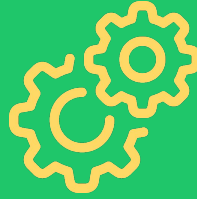
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# Compensation by Roles

Singapore 2021/2022



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## Compensation by Roles

# Methodology

Titles and seniority might vary across companies. For example, smaller startups might reward the title of Senior Software Engineer to an engineer of 3 years of experience, but a much more established companies might only reward the same title to someone with more than 8 years of experience.

**Junior:** Typically 0-2 years of experience. Mostly fresh graduates or engineers in their first job.

**Mid:** Typically 2-5+ years of experience. Able to mentor juniors and lead small scale projects end-to-end.

**Senior:** Typically 5+ years of experience. Expected to own complex technical initiatives and having more responsibility in designing rather than implementing.

**Principal:** Have deep practical experience gained and mostly answer directly to the senior management of their company. Titles include “Principal Engineer” and “Staff Engineer”

**Lead:** Main responsibility include leading a small team in the technical areas. Might occasionally be involved in people management, but much less common. Titles include “Technical Lead” and “Team Lead”.

**Manager:** Main responsibility include hiring and people management. Titles include “Engineering Manager” and “Software Development Manager (SDM)”.

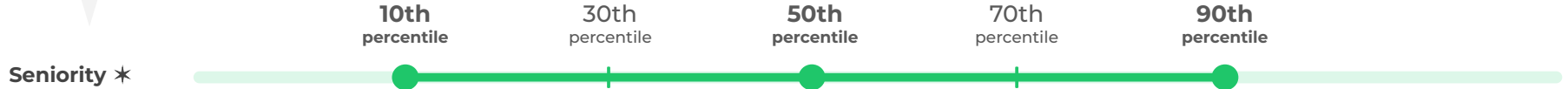
**Director:** Having deep understanding of the market and latest technologies. Main responsibility include innovation and providing technical direction for the company. Titles include “CTO”, “Director of Engineering”, “V.P. / President of Engineering (*excluding some banking and government organization*)” , “Head of Engineering” etc.

# How to interpret the data

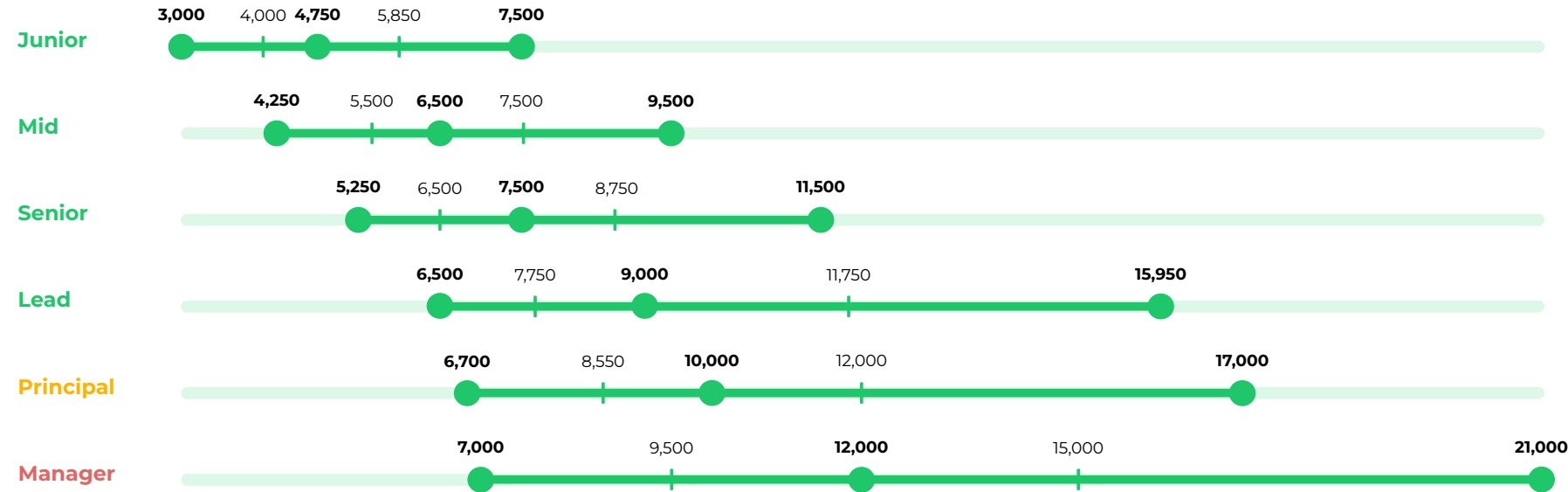
★ The colour represents the number of data points used:

Green	500 and above
Amber	200 to 499
Red	100 to 199

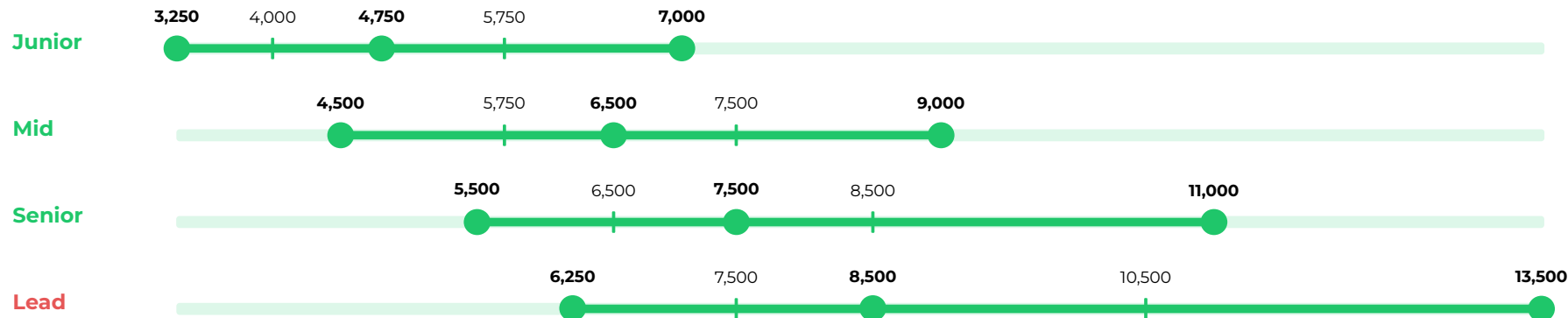
The salary values refer to **monthly base salary** in Singapore Dollar (**SGD**).



# Software Engineers

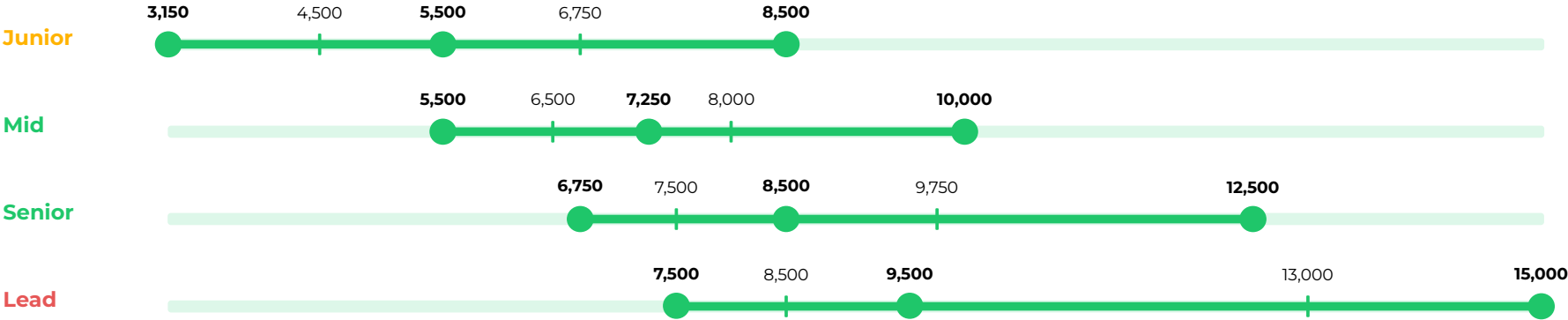


# Mobile Engineer (Android, iOS, Cross-Platform)

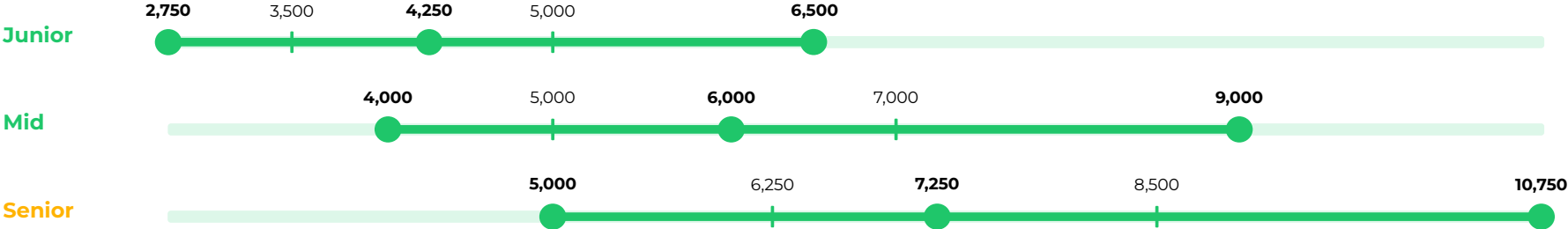


Compensation by Roles

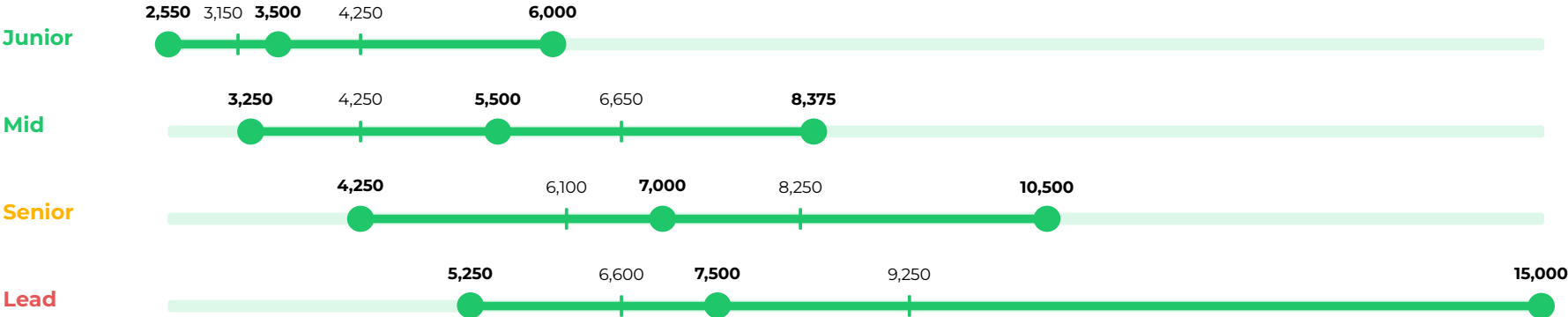
# Data Engineer



# Data Analysts

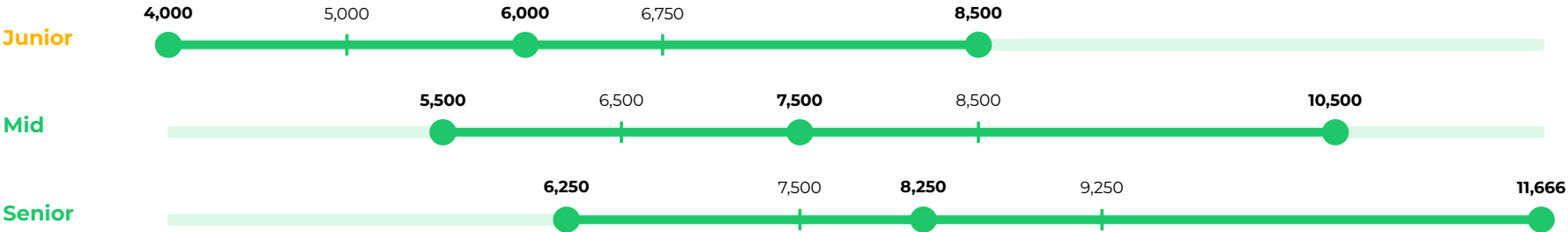


# Quality Assurance (QA)



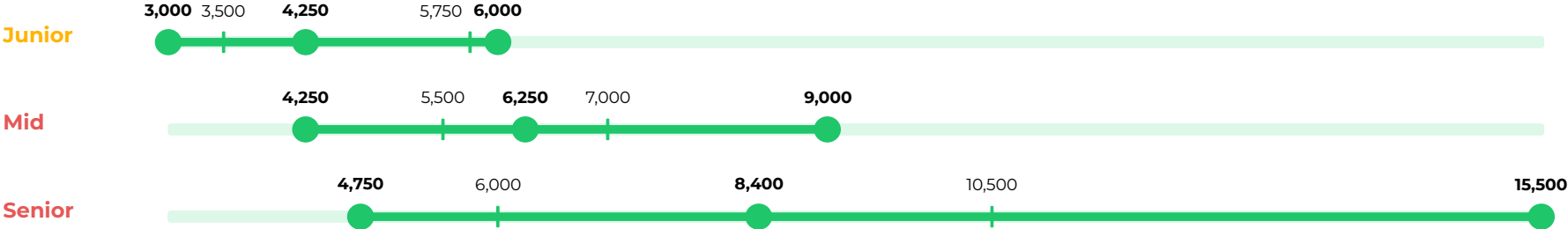
Compensation by Roles

# DevOps



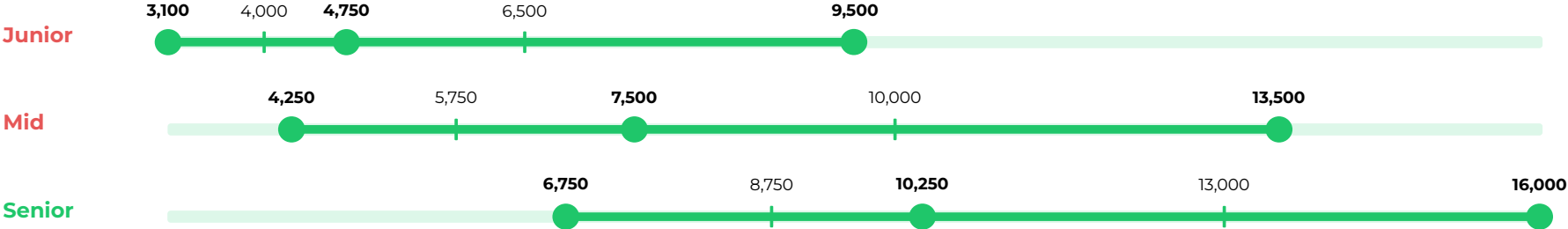


# Cybersecurity Engineer



Compensation by Roles

# Solutions Engineer



# Observations in a Nutshell

1

Throughout 2021, the **salaries for Software Engineers increased the most (22%)** amongst the different technical specializations. It increases by **as much as 32% for more experienced roles** like Lead Software Engineers.

2

If you are 10x engineer, you are in for a treat.  
For Software Engineering roles, the **90th percentile are paid 2.2x to 3x more than those in the 10th percentile.**

3

The salary gap between the 90th & 10th percentile for Software Engineering roles **widens by up to ~3.1x as it goes up the seniority ladder**, from \$4.5k in junior positions to \$14k in managerial positions.

# How you can contribute

1. Help bring transparency to the tech community by sharing this report with your friends and social networks
2. **Tech Talents** - Add your [compensation](#) anonymously
3. **Companies** - Get deeper insights and access to other services by [sharing your salary data](#)
4. [Email us](#) any feedback you have!



# Top Searched Companies

Singapore 2021/2022



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# Top 15 by popularity

1



6

facebook

11

amazon

2



7



12



3

ByteDance

8

Goldman Sachs

13



4

Grab

9



14



5

Google

10

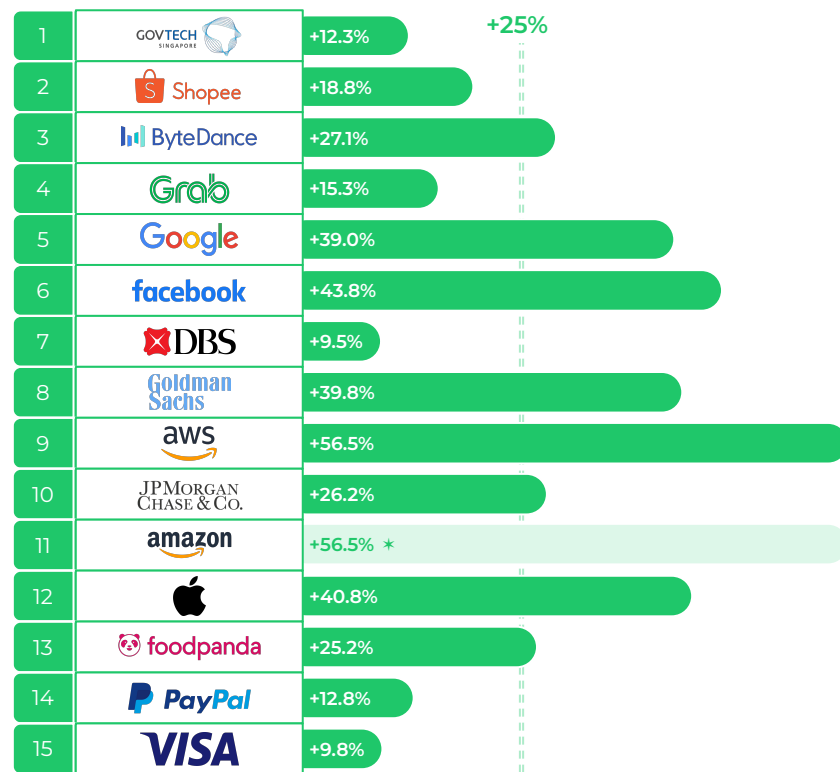
JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

15

VISA

## Top Searched Companies

# Analysis



**9** out of **15** companies pay **≥25% more** than the market's median

We compared how well these companies pay **Software Engineers** as compared to the market.

While there is **no clear correlation** between how well a company pays and their popularity, it is undeniable that **salary is a key factor for attracting talents**.

**Most companies pay ≥12% more** than the median, with **60% of them paying 25% more**.

One interesting fact is that **FAANG** pays very well, at **39% to 56.5% more** than the median.

*\* Note: We do not have data about Amazon's salary range but we can safely assume that it is not too far off that of Amazon Web Service (AWS)*

## Analysis

1	GOVTECH SINGAPORE	3.9
2	Shopee	3.7
3	ByteDance	4.2
4	Grab	4.2
5	Google	4.5
6	facebook	4.3
7	DBS	3.8
8	Goldman Sachs	4.0
9	aws	3.8
10	JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.	4.0
11	amazon	3.8
12	Apple	4.2
13	foodpanda	3.8
14	PayPal	4.1
15	VISA	4.0

5 out of 15 have ratings that are at least 75th percentile.

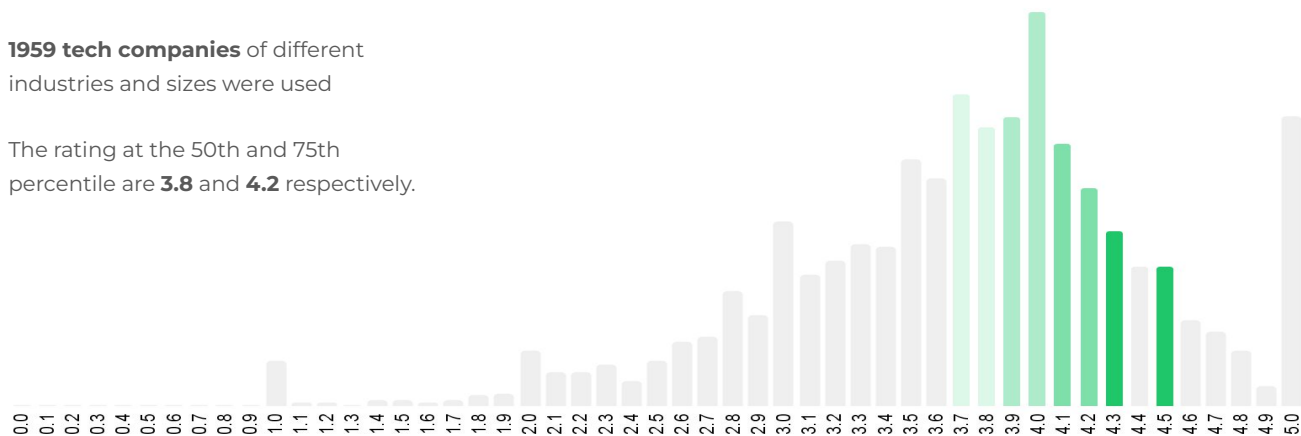
However, smaller companies tend to have to have fewer ratings, thus the spike in number of companies with a rating of 5.0.

If we ignore these anomalies, it is likely that these companies rank much better and above the market's 50th percentile.

**14** out of **15** companies have *Glassdoor* ratings above the median

**1959 tech companies** of different industries and sizes were used

The rating at the 50th and 75th percentile are **3.8** and **4.2** respectively.







# Tech Talents Beyond Singapore

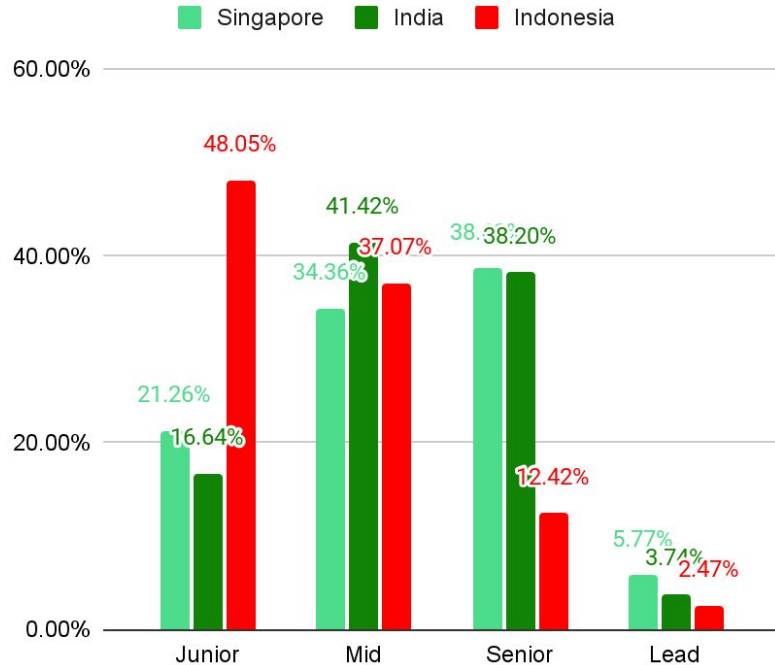
India & Indonesia 2021/2022



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# Breakdown by Seniority



We compared the **number of job listings** for **Software Engineers** based on their seniority across Singapore, India and Indonesia.

We see relatively similar trend across Singapore and India where **experienced engineers make up about 78 - 83% of the job listings**. On the other hand, the figure for Indonesia only comes in at **52%**.

There could be 2 reasons why the hiring demand for Singapore's are mostly for experienced engineers.

Firstly, Singapore has the **highest venture funding per capita in the world** at \$1,398, almost twice that of the 5th country on the list.<sup>1</sup> As such, startups have the capital to afford more senior hires to accelerate their growth.

Secondly, Singapore has been one of the **top choices for some of the fastest-growing companies in US and China**, such as Zoom, Twitter, Tencent, Alibaba and Bytedance. ~80 of the world's top 100 technology firms have a sizable presence in Singapore, such as Google, IBM and Microsoft.<sup>2</sup>

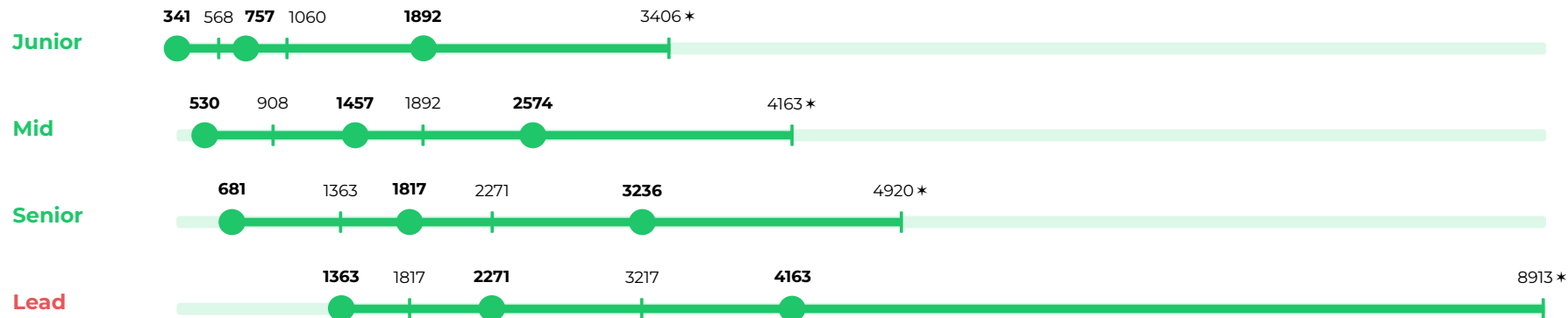
Note that the demand for experienced hires might be even higher as companies might opt to use recruitment agencies instead for faster results.

1. J. Glasner, These Countries Have The Most Startup Investment For Their Size, crunchbase news, November 2, 2021 [Online]. Available: <https://news.crunchbase.com/news/countries-most-startup-investment/>

2. Ng J.S., The Big Read in short: Why the world's top tech firms are converging in S'pore, today, February 6, 2021 [Online]. Available: <https://www.todayonline.com/big-read/big-read-short-why-worlds-top-tech-firms-are-converging-singapore>

## Tech Talents Beyond Singapore

# Salaries in India



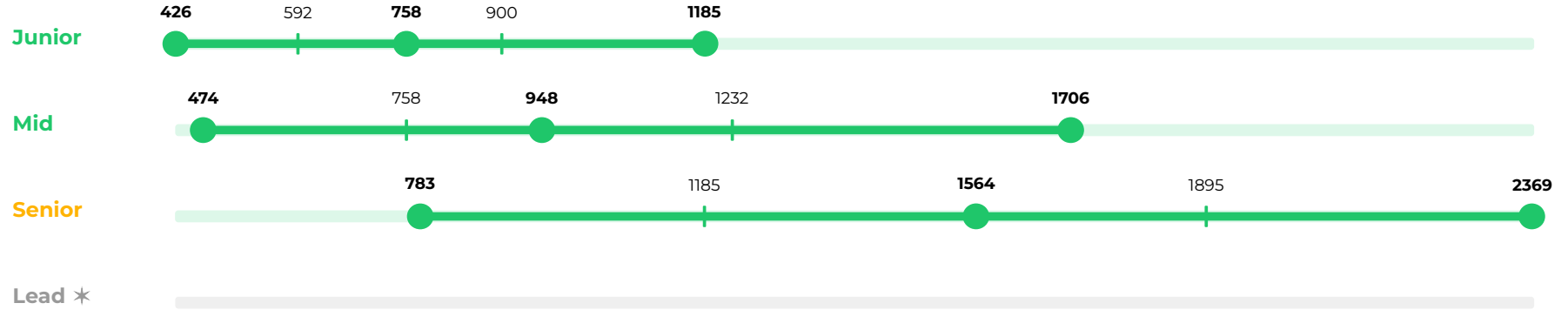
Being a **10x** developer triumph over **seniority**

To facilitate regional comparison, salary data is in SGD, using an exchange rate of  $1\text{ INR} = 0.0181673\text{ SGD}$  (31st Dec, Xe.com)

\* We included the 99th percentile of salary for India after observing that **salary at the 99th percentile could be up to 114% more than that of the 90th percentile.**

*Disclaimer: The salary data could be affected by a much wider range of factors, such as the states the company is in, type of industries and accuracy of data posted by employers.*

# Salaries in Indonesia



To facilitate regional comparison, salary data is in SGD, using an exchange rate of 1IDR = 0.0000947716 SGD (31st Dec, Xe.com)

\* As described in the previous slides, because of the much lower percentage of job postings for lead positions, we do not have sufficient data to accurately represent the salary range.



# Talent Management

Insights & best practices by leaders



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# Overview of Employee Life Cycle

1

## Attraction

How potential applicants are exposed to your company

2

## Recruitment

Interview process and candidate experience

3

## Onboarding

Helping new joiners integrate with your company culture and values

4

## Development

Helping employees grow and become better

5

## Retention

Ensuring employees are satisfied with their current employment

6

## Separation

Process to handle the inevitable situation of a employee leaving



# Attraction

Talent Management



### **Interview with Julius Uy, CTO of Kydon Group & ZillLearn**

Julius is also the Singapore Chapter Lead at Google Developers Group, Mentor at Plato

#### **What are tech talents looking out for? What matters to them the most?**

Interestingly, different types of engineers will look out for different things. Take for example, Grab, Carousell, and Lazada. A lot of the early talents there have now left to do their own startups. Different things motivate different people. Many people may think that fresh graduates are looking to join FAANG (MANGA) and tier 2 companies but things are more nuanced than that.

For talents, they should think about their long term and plan their short term in light of the long term. Talents who like the chaos of startups will generally keep staying at startups and those who like stable and siloed work will stay at big tech.

#### **How do you structure compensation?**

Always pay top dollar for top talents. If you cannot compete against Bytedance, go to markets where Bytedance is not there and pay top dollar for top talent. There were several studies done decades ago by the authors of Peopleware where they found that the top 10% of engineers outperform the top 50% by as much as 2.5x. What this basically means is that companies save a lot of money by paying top dollar for top talents.

Here's one example. The Viki Android app streams billions of minutes worth of videos per month. While there, we only had four engineers working on Phones, Tablets, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android Instant App, and Chromebooks. Netflix and Amazon Prime at that time had more than ten times the size of our team. Yet the team was able to consistently deliver top quality output. Viki's Android app beats the major streaming platforms on all benchmarks such as cold starts, app size, crash rate, and so forth, all with only four engineers. Paying top dollar for top talent saves... *[continued]*



## Talent Management | **Attraction**

companies a lot of money.

### **How do I structure non-compensation items to attract?**

As above. Always pay top dollar for top talent. The most important non-compensation item is top tier colleagues. Guy Kawasaki often quotes Steve Jobs saying that A players attract A players. B players attract C players. I think this is true. People who are average will enjoy working with others who are less smart because they can assert their dominance. Not so with top talents. Top talents are easily discouraged when they have to work with people less smart than them.

Yes there's a lot of impostor syndrome working with top talents, but that's also how people can stretch themselves and be better faster. One research has shown that negative experiences make better learning opportunities than positive experiences.

### *What are tech talents looking out for? What matters to them most?*

#### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- Collaborative engineering culture
- Proper engineering process, including CI/CD, code reviews, automated testing
- Modern technologies, languages and frameworks, use of cloud
- Competitive compensation

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

- Better compensation package
- More challenging problems that requires higher capabilities and more concentration
- Unique learning opportunities that they can rarely find somewhere else
- Strong teammates and leaders who are willing to boost her/his growth
- Learning oriented team culture

#### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng, Carousell)**

Culture, impact, package and flexibility

#### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- Challenging problem statements
- Clear product & engineering strategies
- Organisation structure
- Good engineering culture
- Compensation commensurate with skills, experience, and impact
- Stability

#### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- Compensation
- Mentorship
- Technology stack

#### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

Good opportunities to learn, grow and work with other top talents. I think being challenged regularly matters a lot to talents with a growth mindset

#### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

Growth & Learning Opportunities

#### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

Challenging work is the most important factor for tech talents. A great culture, autonomy, flexibility are other important factors IMO.

#### **Winston Teo (Senior Development Manager, Shopify APAC)**

- Growth (What will I be working on? Does it interest me? Purposeful work)
- Culture (Autonomy, How do we work in the new World?)
- Compensation

#### **Teck Chun Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Working with other well-known talents
- Working on hard problems that keep them engaged
- Autonomy and ability to influence directions
- Growing deep skills
- Psychology safety and open culture

### *How do you structure compensation?*

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

It will be a combination of paying base salary that is above average, annual bonus and performance based bonus. Welfare and employee benefits that are customized for employees from different countries

#### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

We have a fixed base salary based on a 12 months structure as well as ESOPs. The latter are getting more important to candidates.

#### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

We try to stay competitive to attract tech talents and we do it through two components: cash and equity. We understand that employees should feel valued and compensated for their skills and contributions.

#### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

Benchmark to FAANG (MANGA) after adjusting for US taxes and cost of living

#### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

We pay market rate for tech talents, but sometimes we are willing to make exceptions for talents who exceed our expectations

#### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

Candidates are placed into bands based on their experiences and expected value output, regardless of education.

#### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

It's a combination of cash, performance bonus and ESOPs.

#### **Winston Teo (Senior Development Manager (APAC), Shopify)**

We pay for impact, and leverage. Our compensation is competitive to top companies.

#### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Paying people fairly at market rate (can't chase unicorns pay scale though), performance based bonuses and promotions
- Equity stake in start-ups to drive co-success
- Reward exceptional contributors over and above company usual remunerations (e.g. one-off fringe benefits)

### *How do you structure non-compensation items to attract?*

#### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- Matching career expectation of engineer with their professional development goals
- Making promotion criteria clear to each team member
- Clearly showing the product vision and technical challenges

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Everything is learning oriented here in CDC. Process Design is all about attempt, retrospect and become better next time. Team Formation is based on learning potential and chemistry between people. Performance Review is about finding the growth path to career goals. There are budget and time reserved for learning as well

#### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

Until a couple of years ago it was mostly about perks

in the office and snacks whereas now more of the focus is around work from home support or internet bills.

#### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- Commitment to organisational values
- Engineering culture
- Growth opportunities for employees as the company grows

#### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- Open and transparent culture and communications
- Freedom to work across different projects and across the technology stack
- Vertically integrated teams that have the operational freedom to own problem statements
- Team processes that rely on providing context and not control

#### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

We provide a warm and collegial environment

where everyone has access to everyone so that they know each other. We practice open communication so that we all know what are the challenges the department and the company face and we are upfront about our challenges

#### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

- Wellness fund (for productivity)
- Learning fund (for external courses/skills)
- Medical insurance
- Flexible hours
- Flexible work from home arrangement
- Minimum leave of 14 days. They can take more, but minimum 14 days/year
- Potential ESOP

#### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

Some of the intangibles include medical benefits, unlimited leave policy, remote-first culture and ability to move between offices and teams. Flexi-working hours, employee recognition, career progression, L&D, mentoring & coaching opportunities are also areas we focus on.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Job role flexibility
- Working hours and location flexibility
- Allow side projects which may not be related to core work
- Sustainability / societal impact that a company may contribute to other than their core business; or even better: their core business helps create positive community impact directly or indirectly impact, working alongside other talents to grow skills, having a great culture might be key pull
- Established companies which can afford to pay for talents but doesn't demonstrate some of the points might turn talents off too

## *How does it differ for different stages of a company?*

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- In a startup, it is mostly clean start, small team, moving fast, break things. Sense of quick achievement and experimentation
- In an established company, this is mostly about doing things right, following best engineering practices, clean code, clean architecture, observability and production support.

### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Fast to market has been the core execution criteria from day 1. When business is much bigger nowadays, our technical challenge becomes how do we deliver higher quality products with more engineers without sacrificing fast to market competitive edge.

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

It gets more structured and complete throughout the journey I'd say.

### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- Startups typically provide better opportunities to grow for ambitious employees
- As the roles boundaries are quite fluid, employees get to play different roles and in this process, they gain valuable experience
- Established companies may not provide a fast-paced growth environment, but they do compensate with better compensation, perception of stability, and rewards.

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- Gradual introduction of engineering best practices
- Introduction of middle management layer

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

In an early stage, employees can be expected to work on anything and everything. It can be

## Talent Management | **Attraction**

frontend work 1 day, back end work the next, a bit of product management the week after. So there will be some chaos at the start, but over time as the tech teams get to a steady state. Things will be more established and formalized and the tech talent will get to be in a place where they can be more focused.

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

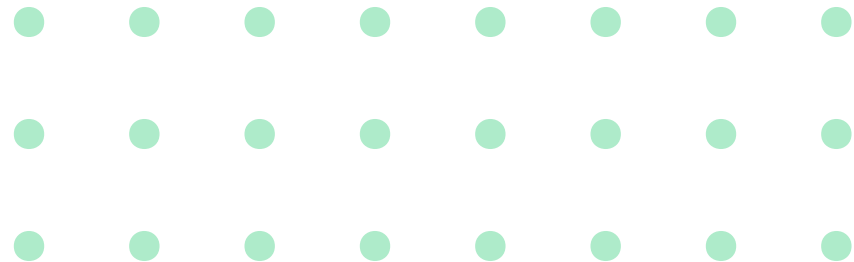
- Startup: Probably can't afford too much non-compensation items, usually ESOP is guaranteed in place of other benefits
- Scaleup: More funds for non-compensation items
- Established: Hope I can provide more info on this when we get here!

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

Early stage companies have lower ability to pay in cash, and tend to attract higher risk takers hence the compensation is higher on ESOPs. For Established companies, it's a mix of cash and ESOPs.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- For start ups without deep pockets, making an impact, working alongside other talents to grow skills, having a great culture might be key pull
- Established companies which can afford to pay for talents but doesn't demonstrate some of the points might turn talents off too



# Recruitment

Talent Management



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### *Interview with Alwyn Tan, Open Government Products*

Alwyn Tan is a hiring manager in OGP

#### **How do you build your hiring pipeline of candidates?**

- Job portals - mostly LinkedIn, using curated portals for specific roles, eg cultjobs for design
- Community engagement and building - On-site campus recruitment, establishing presence in relevant interest groups, eg /r/singapore\_compsci Discord group, participating in tech events as well as trying to create our own, eg Deep Dive.
- Often working hand-in-hand with comms and marketing to establish our reputation and influence in the community

#### **What is your recruitment process?**

- Codility test; submission inspected rather than relying on scores

- Two technical interviews each consisting of a) Discussion on technical work as indicated on resume and b) Coding exercise
- Division head interview, which may contain more discussion on technical work

#### **What are common mistakes made during the recruitment process?**

Insufficient vetting of communication skills. Communication skills are important for two reason: 1) Determines how well the candidate would work alongside the rest of the team in terms of discussing ideas or coordinating during a production incident and 2) Determines how well the candidate would convey ideas to non-technical audiences. Given that a significant part of our work involves talking to other branches of government with often non-technical audiences, this matters to us as it influences how much we can bring about change

Interviewers would look out for how well candidates can articulate themselves and the technical ideas they have during the interview, but



only do so passively, ie, in the course of vetting for other criteria. This is also complicated by some common understanding as a fellow engineer, which may limit understanding how well candidates could communicate to eg, non-technical audiences.

### *How do you build your hiring pipeline of candidates?*

#### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZillLearn)**

Job portals, recruitment agencies, remote hiring, outsourcing, meetups, referrals etc.

#### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

Job portals, LinkedIn, remote hiring, referrals, no external recruitment agencies, external software for drip marketing

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Everything possible! On top of all the actions mentioned above (e.g. job portals, recruitment agencies, remote hiring, outsourcing, meetups, referrals), another interesting (and sad) thing happening is that our talents are moving away from Hong Kong to other countries, which actually smoothen our office setup and expansion in those countries.

They form the core teams in different countries with all the prior business and technical knowledge. They helped interview candidates in different time zones and coordinate different onboarding logistics.

Company branding helped a lot over the past few months. When our company is putting up huge promotion ads and partnership news (e.g. Crypto.com Arena), there are more informal external career enquiries and internal referrals happening around our engineers.

Another side of the branding is our employer branding. This is one thing that we haven't put enough effort into (and we should). Currently, it is improving unintentionally when more talented and experienced engineers join from around the world.

Local developer communities might notice that some respectful developers are joining. Some might notice their ex-colleagues changed their profile on LinkedIn, etc. All these "influencers" helped us to grow organically instead of relying on

## Talent Management | Recruitment

random candidates who have not done any prior research on us.

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousel)**

It depends on the seniority of the role. For junior roles, meetups and events, for more senior ones agencies can help. Referrals are a great source for both groups as well as job portals.

### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

Job portals, recruitment agencies, remote hiring, outsourcing, meetups, referrals etc. We use a combination of all of the above, with referrals being our strongest source.

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

I spam recruitment agencies and telegram groups. I also tap on bootcamp coding schools and my circle of developer friends.

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

LinkedIn, Recruitment Agencies, Remote Hiring, Meetups, Referrals

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

We use a combination of job portals, recruitment agencies etc., with referrals being our strongest source.

### **Winston Teo**

#### **(Senior Development Manager (APAC), Shopify)**

In APAC, we primarily depend on our own career sites, in-house recruiters, referrals, and networks. Meetups is almost impossible in the current pandemic era.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

LinkedIn hunt, Recruitment agencies, Remote hiring (through local partners or agencies), Referrals

## *What is your recruitment process?*

### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZillLearn)**

We have four rounds of interviews; Three technical and one behavioral interview. We test their algorithms, system design, general cognitive ability, and behavioral skills. Excellent people want to work with other excellent people, so we try to hire the best (everyone says that). Why do we have four rounds? That's because research shows that any more interviews apart from that is not statistically significant to tilt the scales. To be clear, Google has 4 rounds for non-engineers and 5 for engineers. We however decided to keep the numbers at 4 unless we need to break a tie.

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- Sourcing into applicant tracking software
- Interview with recruiter for basic role and culture fit, some non-trivial screening questions
- 2 technical interviews on software design and coding. Some teamwork culture-fit questions are asked as well

## Talent Management | Recruitment

- Homework assignment to solve a problem that usually doesn't take longer than 4 hours.
- Final CTO interview that mostly focuses on culture fit

### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Every team has a different process. Speaking of Main App Backend Team, there are 4 rounds interview

- HR CV screening and basic check
- Working Experience and Cultural interview
- Take home coding test (3 to 4 hours)
- Pair programming test

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousel)**

At a high level there are 5 stages of interview for candidates (CV screening, recruiter call, skills interview, meet the team, co-founder) with some stages that might require 2 rounds. We debrief all candidates that pass the skills interview, regardless of the outcome.

### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- We start every recruitment process with a well-defined job description for each role

- We engage and assess candidates through a well-defined interview loop
- We end it off with a hiring debrief to gather all stakeholders' feedback for holistic evaluation

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

We do 4 rounds of interviews. There is an initial screening round, 1 online MCQ round, 1 live coding round and 1 final culture fit round. The fastest that we have done is 1 week for all 4 rounds.

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

1st Round: Screening Questions

Examples:

- Choose between money or power? Why?
- If you had to choose to live without one of your 5 senses, which one would you give up?

Rationale:

- To filter out candidates that are only "barely" interested or not interested in the company
- To learn more about the candidate before the first call, makes the call more interactive and interesting

2nd Round: Hiring Manager

3rd Round: Technical Assessment

4th Round: Culture Round

5th Round: Founders Round

6th Round: HR Round (Discussion on package/ employee guidelines etc)

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

We have a well thought through interview loop defined for every role with details of interview rounds, questions, panel, and decision rubrics. The goal is to make the process as consistent as possible. There is a big focus on providing a positive interviewee experience as well. Typically it would start with an online test, followed by 3 rounds of interviews with Software Engineers and Engineering Managers.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Initial chat for professional alignment (candidates attitude and desires, sharing what we stand for and why we are hiring), either by our Talent Acquisition or hiring manager
- Formal interviews (technical, functional) by senior team mates
- Formal interview (technical, cultural, thought process) by hiring manager
- Formal interview (culture fit, scenarios handling, attitude screening, mid to long term career aspiration conversations) by Head of Engineering

## ***What are common mistakes made during the recruitment process?***

### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZillLearn)**

I'm not sure if there's a longitudinal study on this, but this is my experience. One major mistake I've seen is letting power gaps get in the way of rational decision making, and this applies outside of recruitment too. In every company, there's a HiPPO. The HiPPO is the Highest Paid Person's Opinion. The HiPPO venom usually shows up when the recruiting team works with senior executives. There have been studies where people who get into senior executive positions tend to be egotistical, opinionated, and often wrong. (Like me, often wrong) They're also very good at kissing up and kicking down. In every American dollar there's an inscription saying, "In God we trust." Indeed in God we trust. Everyone else is to bring data, the HiPPO is not God and therefore has to bring data. If the executives cannot keep their ego in check, it's very difficult to get anything right.

I've seen HiPPOs get in the way of hiring spectacular talents "because the talent rejected the company's offer once" or "because we're not willing to budge on a lowball offer we gave the candidate."

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- Hiring candidates for which the panel was on the fence. None of them turned out to be a good hire.
- Not investing enough into sourcing. For many roles we were able to process the pipeline quickly with no hire and no-one else left to interview. So quality sourcing is key.

### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Nothing major happened in the past 2 years during the recruitment process in our team. As a retrospective, we didn't hire enough people to meet the business growth. Possible reason could be our lack of global employer branding in the past few years. We could have done more to expand the candidate pool earlier.

**Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

It sometimes happens that none of the interviewers collect information about a particular competency or we assess a given competency more than once.

**Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

Waiting for the perfect candidate with complete required skill sets can be challenging and unrealistic in this highly competitive climate. Candidates who have a strong technical foundation and high growth potential can be strong contributors and job-specific skills can be trained on the job.

Failure to heed candidates' feedback: It is important to listen to candidates' feedback on their application experience as they can bring insights to areas for refinement when it comes to the hiring process.

**Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

Hiring a person just on technical capability alone and not enough emphasis on coachability and

culture fit. A person may be a top notch coder, but he may not be a good fit for the company. We have rejected a few candidates based on culture fit.

**Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

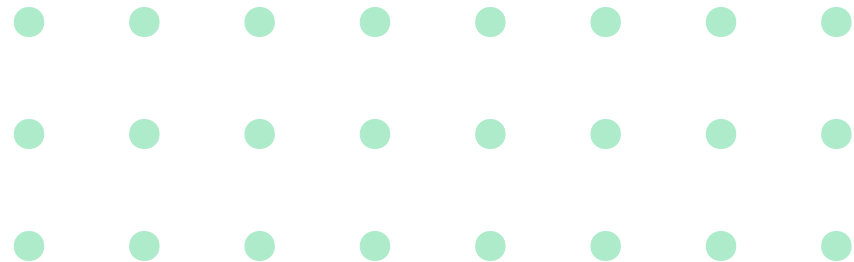
Our process has been working for us very well so far since we've implemented it

**Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

There could be misaligned expectations between the hiring team and candidates so it's important to set them right. We have weekly meetings on our recruitment process and pipelines and we regularly iterate on issues as they come up. Through this we identify patterns and improve our processes to ensure we can provide a great candidate experience as well as maintain a consistent and objective hiring process.

**TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Not sufficiently prepared by interviewers based on candidate's experience and skills to ask the right questions
- Poor time management and rushing it through in the end
- Always allocate 20 to 30 mins buffer for candidates to ask questions



# Onboarding

Talent Management

3



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### *Interview with Gibson Tang, SEA Engineering Lead of Lenskart*

Gibson is also previously the Head of Engineering for DishDash.co

#### **What does good onboarding look like? (and what does a bad onboarding look like)**

For me, I emphasize something called TOFC which stands for (Time to First Commit) which means how fast a developer is able to push a commit to the code base. Being able to push a commit quickly after they have joined means that the developer has all the necessary tools, environment and information to start contributing value to the company.

For the first 30 days, the developer will be expected to have his code reviewed every time and to have lengthy code review sessions along with extensive

pair programming sessions. For the 30 to 60 days, the developer is expected to be able work on their own with lesser guidance, but still have the occasional check-ins with a senior developer. And from the 60 to 90 days, the developer should be able to stand on his own 2 feet with minimal guidance. Some people take a longer or shorter time period and that is understandable. Being able to demonstrate coachability is more important.

#### **How do we onboard employees in the current remote/hybrid environment? Especially employees located overseas?**

For our employees in Singapore, I always make it a point to bring them to lunch to have a talk about the schedule for the day. I will also present the culture deck and our technical roadmap so that they have an understanding of what is ahead for them. If possible, I will also get the rest of the tech team to meet up with the employee on his first day so that he can meet them face to face rather than through a video screen.

As we are now mostly WFH, so for the initial few days, I will try to have regular check-ins with the new employee and encourage him to communicate more by asking their viewpoints on certain technical matters so that they do not feel left out.

### *Describe how a good and bad onboarding looks like?*

#### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZilLearn)**

A study was done at Google where they found that the average time a Google Engineer becomes fully productive is 9 months. However, they can actually reduce this to 6 months if these five elements apply.

- The Noogler (new Googler) should meet at least two people. They found that building a social network makes a huge difference.
- If the Noogler is an engineer, one good predictor of their speed to reach peak productivity is whether or not they check in code within the first week.
- They also found that a computer that works and a desk is helpful (You can imagine how companies screw this up pre-pandemic and even more so during the pandemic)
- When an employee gets hired, they receive an email one day before their first day around things they can do to be more productive.

- The manager also receives the same email 3 days before.

This method eventually resulted in a 2% productivity boost on the average for the entire employee's tenure. This might sound small, but that's 1 free employee for every 50 employees. If you have thousands of employees, you get free productivity the size of entire teams.

#### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- We get good feedback about our onboarding process, so I consider it "good".
- We create an onboarding checklist with all the materials the new member should read to get familiar with the company, the culture, the org structure, the company product, their team's product. They usually take 2-3 weeks to read everything
- First week of onboarding the target team adjusts the time to make sure the new member has enough attention
- Ideal in the first 1-2 weeks the new member gets their first real assignment
- By the end of first month the engineer would usually get to their full potential and



# Talent Management | Onboarding

start performing at their level

- By 90 days engineers would usually start contributing to product roadmap and give opinion on how the product should evolve

## **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

- There is a 2-weeks official onboarding and orientation period for every new engineer: security training, account setup, working environment setup, production release (at least once), team member introduction, observing team processes, reading. No project work is expected for them.
- After the onboarding period, engineers are assigned to a feature team or core component team and start learning by doing.
- A Probation Review between engineer, team lead and people manager is conducted around 90 days. Engineer's first year growth plan is discussed and refined together. Short term role and responsibilities expectations from both sides are aligned too. Occasionally, role change, job promotion, team swap and core technical focus area shift might happen as part of the probation review.

## **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

- A good onboarding should allow new employees to be able to fix a tiny bug in their first day and something a bit more structured within their first week. Their 30/60/90 goals vary a lot with their seniority as well as familiarity with the tech stack we use, but in general it's a combination of impact and overall understanding of the codebase and product.
- A bad one is where the employees are left thriving through outdated or missing documentation without any structure or plan

## **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- We assign a buddy to every new hire to help them orientate themselves during their initial weeks with us
- It is vital to have a well documented onboarding launch plan with a call to action and milestones to set the new hire up for success in their role.

## **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

Developer should be able to hit the ground running in a week, this means getting access to all systems (Slack, cloud accounts, password manager, etc.)

## **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

1st Week (Operationally ready)

- Can set up local environment & spin up services easily
- Can adhere to style guides and coding styles
- Knows how biz reqs are translated to stories
- Knows how to report, sprint cycles and issue lifecycle
- Understand the development workflow
- Been through some scrum ceremonies
- Knows exactly how their work value-add to the company and the projects
- Close a story point with tests
- See their changes in UAT

## Talent Management | Onboarding

### 1st Month

- Been through 2 sprints and all the ceremonies involved
- Can start mentoring new hires/juniors
- See changes in Production

### 2nd Month

- Can start innovating for the product vertical
- Can start owning projects

### Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))

A good onboarding should make the employee feel welcome, and provide them with all resources they would need to understand the organizational and technical context. We build very detailed onboarding documents for our new joiners with a company background, team introduction and technical introduction documents. We also put in place mid and end probation reviews, connect sessions with the CEO, and make sure to seek feedback from all new joiners. This is especially important in a remote-first culture because you can't walk up to another colleague's desk. We also match new joiners with buddies who become their go to person for their first 90 days.

### TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)

Pre-day 1 logistics: laptop, space (where applicable), monitors, adapters, email accounts

Company 2-day "Dojo":

- Introduction to the business and products, who's responsible for what
- How the company make money and what are some of the challenges
- This year's plan and company goals / objectives
- Products capabilities

Team level onboarding:

- Buddy assignment
  - Tooling setup
  - Repos navigation
  - READMEs
  - FAQs
  - Product, technical documentation
- Team structure and ways of working
- Inducted into scrum ceremonies (if following scrum / agile), self introduction
- Manager / team lead to discuss 30/60/90 days plan by start of 2nd week

## *How do we onboard employees in the current remote/hybrid environment? Especially employees located overseas?*

### Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZilLearn)

In a 1974 study, Thomas Allen observes that the most successful projects were those driven by sets of individuals who formed what he called "clusters of high communicators." Teams who communicate a lot complete their projects 32 percent faster. Back at Rakuten Viki where all engineers are co-located, we were able to reduce meeting time to only 30 minutes in a weekly standup. I tried the same method, this time with a remote team, and that failed miserably. It turns out that when people are remote, especially juniors and new hires, they are worried that pinging people on slack will interrupt their focus. Yet that's the entire point of working collaboratively: to communicate and communicate

## Talent Management | Onboarding

a lot. So we had every team do daily standups. Now, we counterintuitively spend more time in meetings but we were able to uncover blockers early and fix them faster, leading to better productivity and engagement. This is something to think about in a remote and hybrid environment.

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- We create an onboarding checklist with all the materials the new member should read to get familiar with the company, the culture, the org structure, the company product, their team's product. They usually take 2-3 weeks to read everything
- In addition to that, there are calls with various team members to answer questions and provide sufficient context

### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

- There is no physical element in our onboarding process at all for the past 2 years. There might be a welcoming lunch and short HR orientation activity, but physically present is not mandatory.
- Some new joiners are getting a new laptop and

an external monitor from our office IT Support department. However, members who are not close to any of our physical offices just buy by themselves and then set up all security applications remotely before work starts.

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

More and more things need to be well documented while the buddy and the manager play an important role in keeping the new employee engaged while physically distant.

### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

We utilize the same strategy, which is flexible for remote/hybrid. Instead of the buddy being physically present with the new hire, they would be present virtually instead.

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

New hires currently onboarded on-site on day 1. Further in-person onboarding decided between new hire and the team he/she is in

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

We ship the laptops with a welcome kit to our remote employees. The rest of the onboarding process remains pretty much the same. Additionally, we do team introductions and I do a welcome call with all new team members in their first week.

### **Winston**

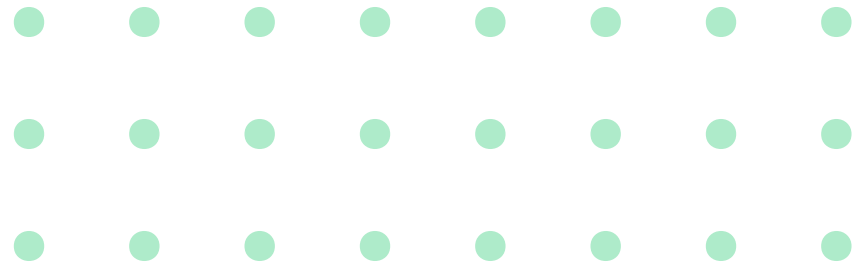
### **Teo**

### **(Senior Development Manager (APAC), Shopify)**

Our entire onboarding process is now a fully remote-process, a mix of sync sessions with async learnings as well.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

Logistics will take a bit of time; laptops will be shipped to them prior to joining. It will be the same process but through online calls - Assign buddy of same locale if possible else someone with closest timezone



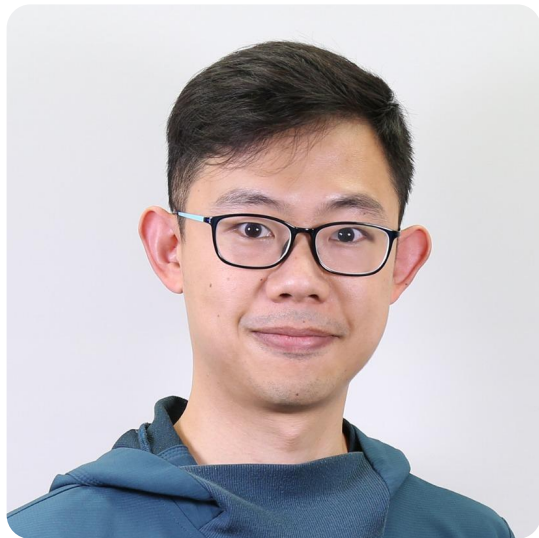
# Development

Talent Management



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### *Interview with Eddie Lau, Engineering Lead of Crypto.com*

Eddie also Co-founded F5 Works and 42 Labs

#### **How to help tech talents grow and develop?**

Leader's mindset

- As a mentor or sponsor, you need to believe in growing others and commit to make changes happen
- If you are the people manager in the technical department, prioritize your day to day work on developer happiness and career growth
- Make their time working in your company worthwhile. People are giving up other opportunities and family time to work with you. Make them proud and more capable when they leave your company

Action Examples

- Be a role model to engineers on time management and demonstrate aggressiveness in learning
- One of our core team cultures and Engineering Principles is "Learning-Oriented". Learning is usually the "why" and "how" our processes are defined. Learning is also the attitude we deal with unknown problems and failure. Learning aggressiveness is one of the core attributes we are looking for from candidates
- Talk to your teammates and identify everyone's strengths, weaknesses, personal interest and long term career plans. Do it regularly through 1 on 1, half year review, annual review, coffee chat, etc.
- Create an open culture that allows teammates to voice out if they have any questions about their own personal development here in the company
- Challenges and learning opportunities are aligned to individuals growth target
- Reserve time buffer for growth. Our target

## Talent Management | Development

(progressing) is to control everyone's priority project tasks to less than 80% of their working hours. Leave room for engineers to free up their mind to learn from each other and also from reading and researching

pair programming sessions. For the 30 to 60 days, the developer is expected to be able work on their own with lesser guidance, but still have the occasional check-ins with a senior developer. And from the 60 to 90 days, the developer should be able to stand on his own 2 feet with minimal guidance. Some people take a longer or shorter time period and that is understandable. Being able to demonstrate coachability is more important.

### **How do we onboard employees in the current remote/hybrid environment? Especially employees located overseas?**

For our employees in Singapore, I always make it a point to bring them to lunch to have a talk about the schedule for the day. I will also present the culture deck and our technical roadmap so that

they have an understanding of what is ahead for them. If possible, I will also get the rest of the tech team to meet up with the employee on his first day so that he can meet them face to face rather than through a video screen.

### **What is the medium to deliver development - webinars, workshops, training courses, mentorship, etc.**

The most important medium is the buddy and mentorship system. Majority of engineers are grouped in a small team (around 5) and working with a Lead Engineer's leadership. Project code review and technical discussion within this small group is the core source of knowledge and skill exchange.

There are also cross-team technical sharing, weekly tech updates and tech community discussion messenger groups. These channels are more for high level technical sharing, informative updates and practice alignments.

On top of those daily interactions, introductory workshops are organized regularly. Engineers

get up-to-date with common tools we are using. Occasionally, customized vendor workshops are arranged to gain specific and in-depth technical knowledge about specific products too

At last, there is still a huge amount of knowledge being shared in the form of mundane videos and cold-hearted wiki documentation pages, the effectiveness is really low.

## **How to help tech talents grow and develop?**

### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZilLearn)**

This is a very complex question. People learn in different ways. This is a nature and nurture question and there's no one size fits all answer. Here's a brief example. I had one engineer in my team who loved video streaming so much he created his own codec extractor and is now working on deep tech. I worked with another engineer who went on and did his own successful startup. Both grew into very divergent paths. What I found most useful is to keep a transparent

## Talent Management | Development

feedback loop on the engineer's long term ambitions and work your way towards that. Do note as well that long term ambitions change and are often unknown or fuzzy. So consistently create that feedback loop to help the talent.

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- I and engineering managers have career discussions with people reporting to them, trying to identify the most relevant career path that would utilize their strengths
- As a result of that process every employee has individual development plan with specific items they should learn, including the recommended materials

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

Everyone has their own ambition, path and pace, so, in general, the manager works with their direct reports to help them draft and refine their own growth plan. It's important that the manager gives feedback on the reachability of some goals and the steps it would take.

### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- Given them challenging problems to work on
- Empower them to make decisions and own those decisions

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- On-job training
- Mentorship from senior engineers
- December Learning Month - training courses, online courses
- January Hackathon - new problem statements, new tech stacks

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

Introduce them to new technologies as part of their day of day job. For example, in Lenskart SEA, we use Typescript and none of my junior developers have extensive Typescript experience. So we gave them some information and slowly introduced them to small tasks to get their feet wet and did extensive code reviews so that they develop good coding standards. We also encourage them to read code by other

senior developers to understand how they code and their thought process

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

- Open communications and constant feedback
- Support talents' learning ambitions
- Grow by doing, i.e. if they want to learn security, go and help out in the security team

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

This is a very important topic for us and we take a multi-pronged approach to growth and development of tech talents. It starts with defining career progression ladders and requires constant communication on their goals and aspirations. We have a Learning and development program that allows them to pursue courses, bootcamps, purchase books directly, and work with leadership coaches. We also have partners that provide training and certifications related to their work. Additionally, the biggest learning and growth comes from working on challenging problems and having other senior tech folks to work with.

### **Winston Teo (Senior Development Manager (APAC), Shopify)**

- We believe that all our folks own their own development, and we will support their development.
- Exposing tech talents to challenging problems.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Set clear directions, explain tech strategy and the whys so that context is shared
- Over communicate context and pass-downs
- Assign problems but do not prescribe solution; be present for guidance if need be
- Pairing during design, development helps accelerate know-hows
- Senior to junior coaching
- Junior to senior reverse mentoring
- Plan for knowledge sharing sessions
- Mandate downtime in schedule for training, self-growth etc
- Connect your engineers with the tech community to grow their personal network

***What is the medium to deliver development - webinars, workshops, training courses, mentorship, etc.***

### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZilLearn)**

I think the best medium is to genuinely care for the person for his or her own sake. One major world religion has a saying, "Do unto others what you want others do unto you." It's the basic mantra that I found to be most useful to live by. When you genuinely care for people for their own sake, you can open up opportunities for them to grow more than the standard solutions. Every person's need is different in different stages of his or her life. For example, I have one direct report who I strongly felt should we should fail in the interview but my boss decided to hire him anyway. At any rate, we assigned him tasks to slowly build up his competency. We then asked him to write articles and then speak at local tech events. He eventually

spoke at a conference in Tokyo. While all these things are happening, we also assigned him a very complex project around video streaming and separately sent him to Google I/O. He was so enamoured by the tech scene at Silicon Valley that he made it his goal to work there one day. After more than three years working with us, he left for the US and is now working in the Operating Systems team at Google in Silicon Valley. We still keep in touch to this day, and despite him being at Google for a while now, he still says the best moments of his career is when he was in our team. Hence, to genuinely care for the person for his or her own sake can reap real dividends.

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

They're all good but for different purposes. Mentorship for example is always important, particularly if self driven and accompanied by chances to practice. Workshops might be more helpful for team skills development (collaboration, etc.). Training courses and webinars allow the individual to define the pace of the learning.



## Talent Management | Development

We have a Learning & Development budget that also comprises time off that people can take to attend classes or events.

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- Training courses
- Online courses
- Mentorship

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

In Lenskart SEA, we move at Lenskart speed, so we focus heavily on mentorship and code reviews to train our developers. We also do the occasional pair programming on big tasks so that they can learn from more experienced developers.

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

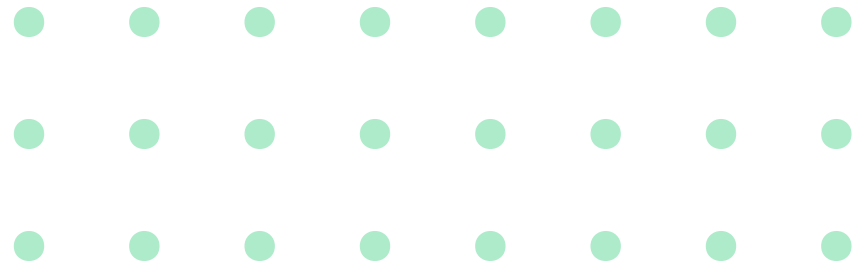
- Mentorship
- Training courses
- In-house webinars and workshops are a work in progress

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

Since everyone has different ways of learning and absorbing knowledge, we engage through a combination of all these different mediums.

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

- Online resources such as O'Reilly platform offers tech focused books, training, sandpit environments etc that allow talents to continuous tap into ever growing trends and deepen their know-hows
- Formal training leading to certifications (for those who wish to)
- Senior to junior coaching
- Junior to senior reverse mentoring (any skills which a junior can impart will reinforce his/her capabilities)
- Tech talks / knowledge sharing sessions
- Conferences



# Retention

Talent Management

5



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### *Interview with Teck Chun Pang, Head Of Engineering of DataSpark*

TeckChun was previously Engineering Lead for Commercial & Industrial product, Platforms and Engineering Productivity teams, SP Digital.

#### **What makes tech talent stay at a company?**

- Great culture
- Autonomy
- Able to grow their skills in an engaging manner
  - Roles that leverages their strengths
  - Roles that challenges their comfort zone (this depends on the personality of the individual)
- Remuneration and benefits cannot be understated
- Career progression

#### **A good culture (and engineering culture) - what is it and how do we go about building it?**

- Psychology safety and blameless culture (blameless does not mean not holding people accountable; we just focused what can be

improved rather than who did what wrong)

- Learning / growth mindset amongst all
- Autonomy in terms of tech stack, how to implement a solution rather than being given instructions
- Measuring performance by outcomes and not output
- Able to relate how engineering can drive positive business outcomes and the engineering initiatives supporting them

How to go about building it:

- Leaders have to walk the talk: all managers and leads
- Focus on the people growth and not only on their work
- Getting to know each talent at a more personal level
- Practice empathy when dealing with individuals
- Context sharing and over communication on directions and why (don't assume they know)

**What are the leading indicators that your talents are seeking new opportunities? And what should I do?**

- 1-on-1 becomes a chore for them
- Less engaged at work and the challenges assigned
- A sudden uptick in momentum and a high enthusiasm to get the same old things completed - because they could be feeling positive on a new beginning but don't want to let their teammates down while their stay is shortening

**How to keep employees engaged, especially when WFH is becoming the default?**

- What was mentioned above applies
- Small teams get together is necessary to spice things up once in awhile
- Virtual offsites helps abit
- Sending surprises to staff to their homes and showing TLC (tender loving care)

## *What makes tech talent stay at / leave a company?*

**Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Most importantly, engineering culture, colleagues, managers
- Interesting projects, relevant technologies
- Relevant compensation

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Lack of strategy for the product
- Toxic environment, lack of recognition
- Low salary

**Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Competitive Salary
- Learning Opportunities
- People (direct report and close peers)

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Lack of relocation policies (before we have business entities in the countries they want to move to)
- Lack of learning opportunities
- Lack of ownership
- Friction/conflict working with leaders/peers

**Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Most of the time it is the culture and the sense of achievement, but it varies a lot. Some talent values autonomy, some others scale, others compensation.

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Unhealthy environment and bad experiences with any of the above.

**Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Personal and career growth
- Opportunities to solve challenging problem statements
- Good engineering culture

## Talent Management | Retention

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Lack of growth opportunities
- Lack of engineering culture
- Top down decision making/ lack of autonomy
- Rewards, and benefits not commensurating with the skills, experience, and impact created

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Freedom to pursue things that may benefit the company, however indirect or uncertain this might be
- Freedom to grow and develop as a professional, including exposure to projects or systems that stretch and test the individual
- Freedom to dissent and disagree, with everyone being peers across the organisation. Where a decision has to be made, disagree and commit

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Excessive workload
- Unappealing mission
- Under-compensating relative to market

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

I would say having learning opportunities and being able to work with great developers are what I would consider as factors. The immediate environment that a tech talent is in plays a big part in whether they will stay or leave.

Tech talent, being technical people by nature. They will hate things such as endless meetings, red tape, red tape etc which interferes with them producing good work. These are factors that will slowly drive you tech talents away.

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Good learning opportunities
- They're not bored out and not burnt out
- Achievements and accomplishments are recognized
- Build genuine relationships with each talent, learn about their ambitions, their goals, and help them achieve it
- Talent has a good leader who can manage and a good manager that can lead.

- Help them improve in areas they're not comfortable with

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Lack of growth
- Lack of leadership & management

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

What makes tech talent stay at a company?

- Challenging work, growth opportunities, and a great culture

What drives tech talent away from the company?

- Bad manager, and stagnant career

### **A good culture (and engineering culture) - what is it and how do we go about building it?**

#### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZILearn)**

In the field of psychology, there is such a thing called the theory of self determination. The idea is that people are naturally motivated when at their work, they find autonomy (the freedom to perform), competence (the capacity to grow), and relatedness (having personal connections). The engineering lead should make every effort to have all three in the team. If he doesn't have the skills to do this (and most don't, to no one's embarrassment), he should relinquish that position for someone else to do.

#### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- Open and transparent communication. No private chats, always-on video on the calls, clarity on which communications channels to use in which circumstances.

- Hire curious, entrepreneurial-minded people who value teamwork
- Clear rules for promotions and bonuses, high weight for 360 feedback from colleagues
- Clear expectations and written guidelines. Mandatory pull request reviews, focus on automation and documentation of decisions, CI/CD, automated testing – all other best practices that challenge engineers to do their best
- Pyramid of mentorship: leads look after seniors, seniors look after SE2, SE2 look after juniors on a daily basis
- Blending of all roles within the team: UX, product managers, backend engineering, frontend engineering, data science – all work on one team and use the same communication channels.

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Culture / Engineering Principles

- Learning Oriented: Be aggressive in learning; Grow yourself and people around you
- Empathy: respect and care about others
- Give and Take: Help each other to grow

- Ownership: Step up to take ownership and improve whatever is needed. Think from the owner's point of view on how to achieve goals and how to do things better. Do not blindly follow orders and only do what you are assigned to do
- Observer and Solver: Constantly observing problems around you even if it is not your core domain. Raise your concern, suggest a solution or even fix it by yourself
- Define your own faith: Change yourself or change your company

How do we go about building it

*(Similar to the answer to the question of “How to help tech talents grow and develop?”)* Believe in what you are doing is good for everyone, be the role model to demonstrate it and commit to it

#### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

I believe in culture being defined by actions, rather than documents. So, a good culture is where employees feel safe to share their opinions, even if it leads to healthy discussions and disagreement.

## Talent Management | Retention

Where failure is considered part of the journey and more emphasis is placed on recovering quickly..

### Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)

A good engineering culture encourages ownership behavior and helps employees grow up to their full potential.

How to build it? It is a big challenge especially in the current environment. Following are a few points which could help building a good culture however it is not an exhaustive list.

- Leaders has to set examples of humility, mutual respect, and ownership
- The organization should provide equal opportunities to everyone
- Organizations should have a clear vision and mission statement and ensure that employees understand it
- Customer and employees focus should be the core of organisation strategy
- Decisive leadership

### Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)

*(This response was quoted and edited from Open Government Products's Deep Dive #1 conference)*

A big thing that really changed was speed as the team had to move a lot faster than government traditionally is used to.

A conscious trade off is being less consistent on processes because being great in the next week is more important than being perfect in the next month. One example is the development of the COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment Booking system, where the policies were constantly changing and introduced on a (almost) daily basis.

Another interesting thing during COVID-19 was the calibration of the definition of urgency in the team. While urgent could mean something is on fire and needs to be fixed on a national crisis level, in some places, urgent could mean "oh my

boss needs it". The team eventually calibrated the definition to "I need to wake my boss up even if it is in the middle of the night". This allows everyone to calibrate according to this empirical bar and communicate on the same page

### Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)

A good engineering culture is 1 which thrives on cooperation and enables them to be as productive as possible. That can be things such as

- Setting up automated build systems
- Fast enough laptops
- Shielding them from unnecessary meetings
- Protecting them from things and situations that break their flow

### Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)

- Culture stems from founders and is continuously improved as we hire more talents
- Everyone has a part to play in culture building
- A good culture is an environment where people feel safe to: Speak up, Grow & make mistakes, Learn and have fun

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

I don't think there is one definition of a good culture, it's more about finding the right culture fit for yourself. For engineering specifically, a good culture is one that allows engineers to express their creativity through code to delight your customers.

### **Winston Teo (Senior Development Manager (APAC), Shopify)**

Focus on shipping value and cut out the unnecessary processes (treat everyone like adults)

## ***What are the leading indicators that your talents are seeking new opportunities? And what should I do?***

### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZillLearn)**

One research cited in the book The Business of Friendship notes that the most important factor to

prolong an employee's tenure is meaningful work. The quality of his/her interpersonal relationships comes second, while salary only comes third. The senior executive team holds a lot of power in this. If they don't engage their middle managers, the middle managers won't engage the individual contributors. So in general, treat people well and they will treat your company well. The leading indicator is when the senior executive finds more and more relational cracks showing up, such as less communication, more infighting, hiding of information, and so forth. That said, this is just a rough guide. You will always be caught off guard. You'll often run into situations where there's no warning signs and people will just quit. In my opinion, don't worry about it. Employees can and will hide things from employers. (People still hide things from spouses, parents, and so forth. That's just part of being human) Retention is not as important as survivability. Of course, we want to retain good talent, but the bigger issue companies must face is how to keep anyone from being indispensable, including the CEO.

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

Low engagement, tiredness. Avoidance of vulnerability in conversations.

### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Before answering that, let me clarify the assumption in the question first. I encourage engineers to keep seeking for potential better opportunities. Life is short. People should be working (or not working at all) in the best fitting company that helps achieving their life goals and also their career growth.

You should encourage your teammates to talk about everything and anything during 1 on 1 meetings. If your teammate is not telling her/his direct report of the potential move before resigning, you should evaluate why her/his direct report was not doing a good job discovering that in the first place. If your teammate has decided to leave, whether or not seeing the indicator, the leader has already failed at their job.

Before that decision or thought of leaving happens,



## Talent Management | Retention

the company and leader should have given their best to the teammate: offering competitive salary, funneling tasks that match career plans, providing learning opportunities, etc.

For whatever reason, when they have intention to leave the current company, your responsibility as a leader is to help her/him to analyze which opportunity (staying or leaving) is better to her/him.

During exit interviews, try to discuss what attracts your teammate to part away. Which areas of the other company are doing better? What opportunities exist in the other company but not in your current company?

### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousel)**

Sometimes it can be low engagement, but a good clarifying chat can help understanding whether the reasons are others (e.g. personal ones). Most of the time it's a bit too late to do something, it's often a result of things that have been missed in the past. Having regular and open conversation

with the employees can help identify and address problems while they're still manageable.

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

We generally encourage engineers to prioritise their career development even if it means seeking opportunities outside OGP, since we know we are only as good as our people. We look out for their interest and well-being, since people who develop more will be happier, more productive and make greater contributions to the ecosystem.

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

Some of the warning signs are things such as the talent is slowly being detached, uninterested in their work and exhibiting low energy. When an engineering manager encounters such a situation, he should seek to have a 1 on 1 with the talent to find out the underlying root cause. Sometimes, it could be something unrelated such as family issues etc, but it is better to err on the side of caution and over communicate than under communicate.

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

Typically reduced engagement is a leading indicator. But, I think of it as an open market and if someone does find better opportunities for themselves they should certainly take it. We just focus on making their current job the best opportunity.

## *How to keep employees engaged, especially when WFH is becoming the default?*

### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZillLearn)**

This one is really complex. Here are some key principles. There's a famous personality test called DISC (or DISA) - Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness. When people are working from home, the D-types should take a step back and let the I-types and the S-types take charge of engagement. These two personality types create a lot of excitement and a sense of belonging. I also mentioned earlier about the Allen curve. Companies

## Talent Management | Retention

with high communication will engage employees more and that builds into retention. When there is high communication, it builds interpersonal bonds. Most people will find this true that while the pandemic forced us to have less connections with most friends, other connections ended up becoming stronger. These are the connections who proactively build relationships and maintain connections. The same applies to companies. Here's one major challenge all companies will face. It's very very difficult to find a good engineering leader who is high in both Influence and Steadiness. So most companies will have to work with what they have.

### **Pavel Kudinov (CTO, Connected Freight)**

- Weekly team catch ups with informal content
- Recurring project-related catchups (2 or 5 times per week)
- All-frontend, all-UX, all-backend, all-data science catch ups for hard skills sharing

### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Assuming the job is perfect and our teammates like working here, some level of mandatory interactions should be arranged.

- Weekly tech updates across teams: meeting people outside their buddy system and mentorship
- Regular 1 on 1. Don't skip it !
- Online game sessions
- Initiates casual talks in between serious meetings, e.g.
  - Care about their families and pets
  - Discuss holiday plan
  - Online virtual cover song band
- Prepare meetings better, and spend more time asking questions and discussing to include voices from everyone

### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- Periodic sharing of the bigger picture in terms of business growth, organizational challenges and strategy to solve those challenges
- Periodic 1-1 sessions and skip level meetings
- Meaningful trainings and coaching tailored to employees' growth

### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- Daily online sync-ups on Zoom
- Frequent check-ins by manager

### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

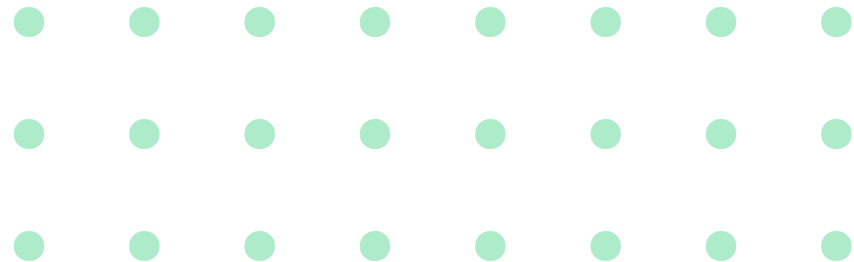
Regularly checking in and being interested in them as a person (not just a resource) helps bring a human touch. I do a weekly dev AMA (Ask Me Anything) where I open my Google Meet chat room and anyone in my team can just drop in to ask me anything. This keeps an open flow of communication between me and my team.

### **Derrick Lee (CTO, Accredify)**

Company sponsored meals over video, and playing games together (online)

### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

There are higher engagement efforts required when employees are WFH. This involves more meetings, 1:1s, scheduled time offs, and online games and fun sessions. I also run weekly sessions with 4 individuals at random where we just chit chat.



# Seperation

Talent Management

6



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### *Interview with Pavel Kudinov, CTO of Connected Freight*

Pavel was previously Redmart's Senior Manager for Transport Technology

#### **How to properly offboard employees, such that we can have a good handover process that leads to minimal disruption to the team?**

- Documentation during their career. Avoid bus factor of 1. This starts from day one, not during onboarding
- If there is work unique to that person, pair them for 2-3 weeks with someone to shadow, and then switch to see how the person who takes over performs the tasks of separating employee

#### **How do we part ways amicably and well, so employees will say good things about us?**

If you are firing someone, make sure they leave with their head held high. They must receive direct feedback about their performance and/or behavior,

and ideally they should be aware of their strengths that are not utilized in your organization and therefore it is better to leave.

If you are laying off someone, you should do everything you can to help them land best next job

If the person decides to leave, you only have one shot to keep them. If they still decide to leave you must respect their decision and help them to make efficient offboarding

### *How to properly offboard employees, such that we can have a good handover process that leads to minimal disruption to the team?*

#### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZilLearn)**

Planning for offboarding should actually start before you hire the employee. There's a term called single source of failure (or tech people call it by the fancy term, Bus Factor i.e. the number of engineers to get hit by a bus to throw the project into disarray). Offboarding should ideally be smooth and uneventful. When knowledge transfer only begins when a person is serving his resignation notice, it's already too late. For example, if you have one backend engineer taking care of the payment service, you ideally would want to have another one to be second in command because if this engineer leaves and no one else knows enough about it, the entire system will be thrown into

jeopardy. Another common technique is to document (but as you know, people do not document. They only document things when they're about to leave). If in the worst case you do not have redundancy, this is the next best thing they can do.

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

It shouldn't need to be worried at the moment of offboarding. The team should have already practiced how to allow teammates to take day offs and off-the-internet long holidays.

#### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

It's good to have a documented handover process in place, 'cause most of the time the backfill is not hired on time, so it's important to have the relevant know-how noted and documented.

#### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

The fact that separation is inevitable, should drive the actions of the separation process. A well documented process which ensures employees as well as organisation interests should be protected

#### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

For handover, I would pair up the employee who is leaving, with another employee who will be the shadow and then slowly take over the work of the employee who is leaving. I would also conduct a 1 on 1 with the employee to ensure that everything has been handed over and also have a few last words. After all, our paths may cross again in the future.

#### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

Sitting down and plan in detail with the departee for the transition plan

- What's on hand and status?
- Who might he/she recommend taking over (for your own considerations)?

Reassigning his/her responsibilities to team member(s) who are taking and early shadowing with the departee on some of his work might be needed so that external stakeholders interactions (if any) are not affected.

### *How do we part ways amicably and well, so employees will say good things about us?*

#### **Julius Uy (CTO, Kydon Group & ZillLearn)**

Most of us have 20-40 years of career ahead of us. What lasts for decades is often not our employment but our relationships. If you treat people well, they will treat your company well. Most senior executives use people as means to an end and end up screwing over both the company and the people inside.

#### **Eddie Lau (Engineering Lead, Crypto.com)**

Offer as much as you can to grow people according to their best interest. You should have helped them to become a better person and gained what they wanted when we parted ways.

Build an open culture first. Be transparent and conduct open performance reviews from day 1. Arrange 1 on 1 meetings with their direct reports

and also dotter line managers regularly. Do not ignore any negative feelings. There might be something that you could not fix, but at least you listened and tried.

Treat everyone with respect. Whatever the reason, just them moving forward to better opportunities

- Write an internal announcement to praise and be thankful for what they have contributed to your team.
- Write a nice LinkedIn recommendation

#### **Damiano Tietto (Director of Eng., Carousell)**

I believe in honesty and transparency, from the day an employee joins so, if there's been healthy dialogue throughout the journey, it's easier to part ways amicably.

#### **Ashish Awasthi (CTO, Homage)**

- Understand the reasons which lead to employee separation
- Never rule out a possibility of working together again

#### **Alwyn Tan (Open Government Products, GovTech)**

- Ground-up efforts that show appreciation e.g. farewell party, gift cards
- Allocating a budget for farewell gifts

#### **Gibson Tang (SEA Engineering Lead, Lenskart)**

I believe that in life, a lot of things are unexpected and maybe me and my employees may have a chance to work together again. So for all my employees, I will always ask them if I can write them a recommendation letter for their future use. As their manager, I will try to see if there is anyway that I can help them to achieve their career goal.

#### **Ishan Agrawal (CTO, Funding Societies (Modalku))**

People leave for different reasons, not necessarily only when they have issues with the company. I think by the time someone decides to leave they have already built an impression of the company. So you should always treat your team right whether they are current employees or in a separation process.

## Talent Management | **Separation**

### **TeckChun, Pang (Head Of Engineering, DataSpark)**

Heart-to-heart chat on how can we improve on things that he / she wished can be changed

Senior leaders taking time to speak to the departee regardless of their levels will help too (provided there are certain level of trust already)

You can't really control what they will say or not say after they have left; the exit process is already late in that intervention



# Outlook for 2022

Insights from founders & leaders





# Key Insights from NodeFlair

## Top challenges for Hiring Tech Talents in 2022

**The talent war for experienced talents will intensify even more.** The demand for senior engineers is higher due to the bullish funding scene and competition from foreign tech firms. Companies with deep pockets would “buy time with money” by prioritizing senior hires, as they are more operationally ready and take less time to onboard and contribute. On the supply side, while the border is opening up from the pandemic and companies are adopting a more remote approach for their engineering team, we expect this transition to take some time.

**The rise of salary for tech talents is not slowing anytime soon.** A better salary package is the top reason (65%) talents are looking for new opportunities. That ranks higher than other reasons

like their desire to work on new technologies, work-life balance and growth opportunities. While companies can, and will, work on the non-compensation aspect to attract talents, the easier way out in the short term will be to increase their hiring budget, especially when they are on a hiring spree.

**Companies can expect a talent drain as newer and more attractive technologies and sectors like blockchain and Web3 arise.** In 2021, investors poured \$30 billion into blockchain and cryptocurrency due to the growth and demand for Web3, NFTs and other related areas. We have observed that due to the underwhelming supply of engineers specialized in blockchain development, companies have adjusted their hiring strategy by targeting software engineers who are interested in picking up blockchain development instead. With the boom in space not slowing down anytime soon, companies will face tougher competition.

## Most in-demand skills and competencies in 2022

**Talent management skills will become increasingly important.** As the war for tech talents grows fiercer, companies will see a drop in average tenure and a higher turnover rate. At some tipping point, the tangible and intangible cost of attracting, recruiting and onboarding talents will rise to be too expensive for companies if they do not retain these great talents well. Companies need to invest in leaders who can grow and retain these talents through non-compensation means, such as enforcing a higher quality engineering culture and creating a better Developer Experience (DX). While companies can solve their recruitment challenge by offering higher compensation, they require a distinguished engineering leader to manage the team well to ensure their hiring investment is not wasted.

# Key Insights from NodeFlair

## *How should companies position themselves to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?*

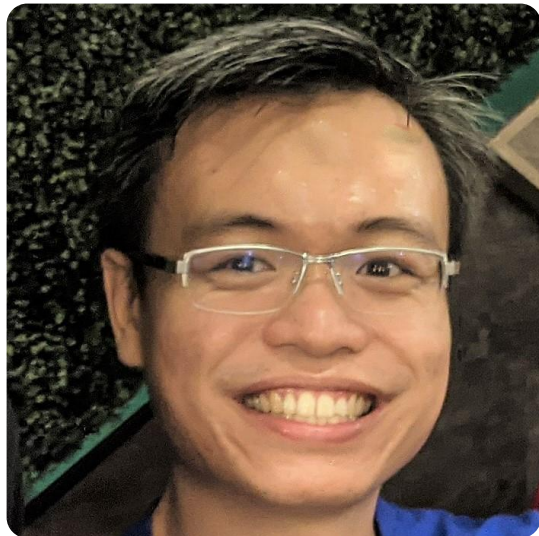
**Instead of focusing on recruitment, companies should also focus on retention.** Many companies are spending a lot of manpower, time and money in recruiting talents, but few allocates sufficient resources to talent retention. Non-technical leaders and CEOs have to understand that talent churn is much more expensive for engineering than a simple one-off recruitment cost. The time needed to replace these members and onboard new ones is longer for engineering is longer than other functions.

**Attract talents with better non-compensation benefits.** After salary, the top 3 reasons why talents are looking then considering new opportunities are 1) Wanting to work with new technologies, 2) Better flexibility and work-life balance and 3) Growth or leadership positions. Re-evaluate your existing working environment to improve these aspects, such as getting rid of rigid working hours and allowing for working from home (even if it is not required by government regulation).

**Be more flexible with the hiring requirements.** Companies often have a long list of required skill sets that they look for in their ideal candidate. However, in many situations, many of these skills are not crucial or can be picked up relatively easy as long as someone has experience in similar technology. Instead, have a clear list of the must-have and good-to-have and rank candidates based on how many good-to-have checkboxes they ticked. Doing so widens your pool of candidates and reduce the time you take to hire the right person.

**Re-evaluate the hiring process.** Often, companies have too many interview rounds than they need. Also, most of the assessments are not conclusive in determining if a candidate is suitable for the role. Instead, companies should figure out and eliminate interview rounds that are repetitive and ineffective. This way, they can complete the entire interview process much faster and have a lower chance of candidates withdrawing their applications.

**Build up their engineering presence through various channels.** At any time, only 20% of the market are active job seekers, while 54% are passive and open to new opportunities. The top 2 methods talents are learning about companies are through their network and reading about news and articles of the company. As such, invest money and effort in meetups and sharing, engineering blogs and developer advocacy, so that their company have huge mindshare.



### *Interview with Julius Uy, CTO of Kydon Group & ZilLearn*

Julius is also the Singapore Chapter Lead at Google Developers Group, Mentor at Plato

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

Very sorry, I cannot disclose much but I can say that the company will continue to hire more Product Managers, Designers, Engineers, and QAs. I can however share what the strategy should look like be it a startup or Big Tech. Typically a stable company should have at least a 2-3 year roadmap. The details will surely change and items in the roadmap will get pushed, but they should have a roadmap. The company should then work their way back to find out how their current and forecasted resources can meet the goal. They iterate on this and arrive at a resource plan (in my case, the engineering department) and then work around that budget. The game plan remains the same. The resource

needs will differ. Longitudinally, we should continue to see the talent crunch and it will be a problem that will never get solved.

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

Believe it or not, I would say the top challenge is psychological safety, not talent crunch nor the great resignation. Small companies have much less of it but it still happens. When people feel unsafe to brainstorm and solve problems, creative thinking cannot flourish. Facing challenges like this requires creative thinking and departing from established norms. Do we increase everyone's salary by x% because historically that's how things work? Or do we compete with the market? Do we open up an office in a different country, or do we stick to our noses despite well funded companies throwing money at the problem? Do we remain elitist in hiring software engineers or do we stop the bleeding first and work on a long term strategy? There are always solutions to problems.

## Outlook for 2022

Donald Trump once wrote in his book that the hurdle facing you is also what your competitors are facing. So the idea is to see who can create the team dynamics to outplay the competition. As Mark Cuban noted, business is the ultimate sport.

### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

This depends on the region. Typically in Singapore you should invest in Web, Backend, maybe DevOps. The primary reason is because Singapore is a satellite office. We don't work on core products from Silicon Valley and Chinese companies. Instead, we work in support functions (ex. Enterprise Engineering) or localized products (ex. Google Pay). As long as the money is from Silicon Valley and China, we should expect these to be evergreen competencies. That said, this is also unsustainable. Singapore continues to flourish in worker ants but not entrepreneurs. We will eventually be overshadowed by Indonesia, Vietnam and India if this keeps on for another few decades.

### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

There are many ways to sell a company. You can sell the vision, the people, the cashflow, and so forth. Every company is unique. Moreover, different engineers are motivated differently. It is true that salaries from big tech are attractive. It is also true that people pay their high salaries with limited learning experience. Startups attract engineers who like the startup environment and big tech attracts engineers with different profiles. You can easily see this in the evolution of a company from a small scrappy startup to a big stable MNC. The engineers who built the startup will leave at some point and work on another small startup. So startups should look for engineers in other startups and big tech, in other big tech.



### ***Interview with Teck Chun Pang, Head Of Engineering of DataSpark***

TeckChun was previously Engineering Lead for Commercial & Industrial product, Platforms and Engineering Productivity teams, SP Digital.

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

Growing the team from current 13 to double the size, with teams geographically located

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

Supply way less than demand in local market  
Overseas hotbed in Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines are also very tight in talents

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

Data engineering, full stack, DevSecOps, MLOps  
Data science (as usual), Automation testing at scale

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

Working big data problems in the geospatial, movement data space and disrupting the telco industry by monetizing their data assets



### ***Interview with Pavel Kudinov, CTO of Connected Freight***

Pavel was previously Redmart's Senior Manager for Transport Technology

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

Rising salaries across the world, rising demand for engineering talents

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

- Emotional intelligence, teamwork
- Customer focus, product-orientedness
- All things frontend – huge shortage of frontend engineers
- Cloud engineering, infrastructure as code, DevOps
- Data engineering, ML Ops

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

- Make sure salaries are within or even slightly higher than in the market
- Have clear product vision
- Make sure to use relevant and exciting technologies



### ***Interview with Gibson Tang, SEA Engineering Lead of Lenskart***

Gibson is also previously the Head of Engineering for DishDash.co

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

Looking to train up the current team and possibly expand it when we roll out new initiatives for our SEA expansion.

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

Competition from other startups and top tech companies who are setting up base in Singapore

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

Senior and experienced developers who have a mix of hard and soft skills, plus having the ability to manage a team of tech talents.

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

We are a Softbank funded unicorn, but our SEA office operates like a startup, so we move at Lenskart speed, but we have the big backing of our mothership in whatever we work on. So we sell position our company as a place where developers who can work at startup speed without the uncertainty that is inherent in startups.



### *Interview with Ashish Awasthi, CTO of Homage*

Ashish Awasthi has prior experience working in Lazada, RedMart, Flipkart, Jabong, Ola

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

We are hiring across product, engineering, design, and data organisations.

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

- Highly competitive market
- Covid-19 led impacts e.g. border closure, remote working etc.

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

Full Stack Development, Data Engineering, Data Science, Product Management

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

- Sharing insights about the business opportunity, engineering culture and problem statements
- Sharing learnings from the past experience in the relevant community





### *Interview with Alwyn Tan, Open Government Products*

Alwyn Tan is a hiring manager in OGP

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

Continued expansion

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

Quality of applicants are getting better over time, particularly amongst graduates and more junior hires. Competition for roles would hence become much closer amongst graduates. Would become increasingly difficult to figure out who we should give offers to.

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

Our culture is in-line with the norm at many tech companies, but our objective is unique: to build technology for the public good.



### ***Interview with Damiano Tietto, Director of Engineering of Carousell***

Damiano Tietto was previously the Tech Lead of Migme (Taiwan)

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

We plan to strengthen our team and enlarge it on some more domains where we want to accelerate our progress.

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

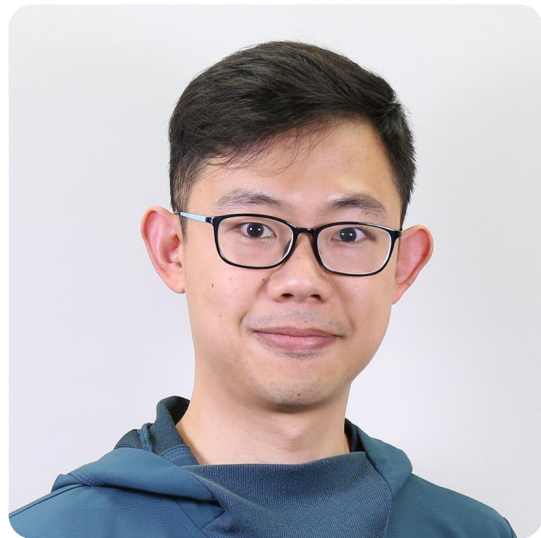
There has probably never been such a heated talent competition in recent years as there's today. A lot of companies are offering better packages, benefits, etc.

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

Data science and data engineering as well as product management.

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

We're trying to constantly work on our branding, both internally and externally and possibly start sharing even more throughout articles, events, etc.



### *Interview with Eddie Lau, Engineering Lead of Crypto.com*

Eddie also Co-founded F5 Works and 42 Labs

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

Continue like 2021: at least double the team size globally. Want to hire both generalists and specialists

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

Building up employer branding globally

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

It cannot be evaluated during an interview or measured, but will be required for almost every global company now: Capability to work as a good teammate from anywhere.

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

On top of my answer to question 1, we will spend more effort on global Employer Branding



### ***Interview with Ishan Agrawal, Group CTO of Funding Societies (Modalku)***

Ishan is also the Technical Advisor of GajiGesa and Mentor at Plato.

#### **What are your hiring plans looking like in 2022?**

We are looking to 2x the team. We will continue to build the team as remote-first and will hire across APAC with a focus on India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

#### **What is the top challenge you foresee in tech talent hiring in 2022?**

The competition for good talent continues to intensify in all markets, but we are pretty confident in the challenges and culture we have to offer.

#### **What are the most in-demand skills / competencies you foresee in 2022?**

Software Engineers with Fintech and scaling experience.

#### **How are you positioning your company to stay competitive in the tech talent market in 2022?**

We are building a credit led SME digital financing platform in SEA, and are truly excited about helping SMEs through the tech we are building. There are some very interesting technical challenges to solve, we compensate competitively and have a flexible remote-first culture. So we are already very well placed to attract and grow the best talent in the market.

# Tech Talent Compensation Report

Singapore 2021/2022

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