



# TECH HIRING 2020

## HOW CAN COMPANIES ATTRACT TOP TECH TALENT AND COME OUT STRONGER ONCE THE MARKET RECOVERS?

The first half of 2020 has seen several events impact the UK's economy. IR35 legislation cast uncertainty over industries that rely on contracted workers for business growth.

The Brexit process saw many businesses put their plans on hold, until the true impact of leaving the EU became clearer. And for many, those plans are still lying in wait. And of course, the impact of COVID-19 has been felt by economies and industries across the globe.

Technology has played a vital role in the fight against the pandemic, supporting people and businesses during lockdown. However, for the sector to maintain and accelerate its growth, confidence levels need to remain high and companies need to have access to talent to fill the sector's pre-existing skills gap.

[CWJobs 2020 Confidence Index](#) reveals the feelings of over 1,000 IT professionals and 500 IT decision makers about how confidence is faring across the country, in light of today's climate.

In this guide, we take a closer look at how recent events have impacted the tech sector and how companies can continue to attract top tech talent to remain competitive after the pandemic:

### 1. Promote a career in tech

Confidence in the UK's tech sector remains strong. Last year, 81% of tech professionals were confident in the state of the industry and this year, 82% say the same, highlighting a stable outlook overall.

This year's Confidence Index reveals that 81% of tech professionals are most confident in the skills within the industry, up from 71% in 2019. As such, companies should aim to promote technology as a career to ensure that their need for tech skills are met.

According to [TechNation's 2020 Report](#), UK tech employment has grown by 15% in the last 2 years, now accounting for 10% of the national workforce. In an industry that continues to thrive year-on-year, companies would do well to create opportunities for their existing staff to retrain or upskill in the tech field. As time goes on, the demand for tech skills is only going to increase, and the companies that thrive post Covid-19 will be those who have the talent to drive performance and innovation.

At a grass roots level, companies should also aim to partner with schools and colleges to make students aware of the opportunities that exist in the tech sector. According to [CWJobs previous research](#), over half (53%) of business leaders say they don't think children are taught enough tech specialisms at school.

Subjects like Information Technology, graphic design and food technology can provide secondary school students with transferrable tech skills that can be used in a variety of roles. One example of schools and tech companies working together is Shireland Collegiate Academy's partnership with the Apps for Good programme, which offers free online tech courses for the classroom. The school is also partnered with Codecademy to teach pupils how to code and is supported by Microsoft.

## 2. Reshape your hiring strategy

The impact of Covid-19 is likely to be felt by employees and businesses alike for some time to come. With many employees now settled into remote working, many will have experienced the benefits of being able to spend more time with their immediate family, while reducing travels costs.

Our Index reveals that setting people up to work remotely has been the most time-consuming task during the Covid-19 outbreak (44%). Nevertheless, businesses who have managed to do so, are benefiting from continued operations. Those who continue to offer this flexibility after the pandemic will have a competitive edge over the competition.

CWJobs research finds that almost half (49%) of tech workers would take a pay cut to be allowed to work from home. And two-thirds (66%) would accept a job that was over two hours away if they could work remotely.

One example of a company that consistently attracts top talent through remote working is tech giant Dell. The company has had a flexible working culture since 2009 and its employees list 'flexibility' as one of the company's top three culture attributes.

Over and above offering remote working opportunities, companies should consider using skills-based assessments as part of their interview process. Not only do these assessments remove any bias from the recruitment process, but they ensure that employers make better hiring decisions, based on a specific set of skills-based criteria. Similarly, Good&Co's culture-fit assessment can match candidates to job roles based on how they might fit with a company's culture.

Businesses should also be proactive in nurturing leads as part of their hiring strategy. By building relationships with their existing talent pool, passive job seekers who otherwise may not have applied for a role may be persuaded to make an application.

The CWJobs recruitment platform provides recruiters and hiring managers with access to a CV database with over 1.2 million potential candidates with the right skills. Companies can also send e-shots and invest in programmatic ads to attract relevant passive candidates.

## 3. Start preparing for IR35 now

Earlier this year, the Government announced a postponement to the impending IR35 legislation that was set to hit the private sector in April 2020. This piece of legislation has long sparked debate within the tech industry, due to its reliance on contractors to fill the current skills gap.



Responses to the delay have largely been positive in the tech industry, as its introduction could lead to a further skills shortage in the private sector. Our Confidence Index 2020 report reveals that **37%** of all IT professionals agreed that the implementation of IR35 will significantly affect their company. One third (**33%**), also agreed their company was not prepared for IR35 this year.

Not being prepared for the introduction of IR35 could have a negative impact on a company's current operations if workers are found to be under IR35 status. Similarly, companies will need to ensure that they have thorough processes in place to effectively determine the employment status of new hires to avoid paying significant penalties.

Companies can prepare for IR35 by accessing a tool called **CEST** (Check Employment Status for Tax), also known as the 'IR35 Test', which aims to confirm how IR35 applies to individual contractors. The tool asks a series of questions relating to the duties of the worker and determines their status based on the answers. By taking the time to become familiar with IR35 rules, companies can ensure that all workers are being employed in the correct manner and that all future hires will be too.

#### 4. Future proof your business by developing key skills

With the UK having officially left the EU on the 31st January this year, many companies are still uncertain about the impact this will have on their business. Our Confidence Index reveals that **29%** of IT professionals are most concerned about the political landscape around Brexit.

To minimise the impact that leaving the EU will have on business operations, companies need to futureproof their business by developing key skills that will be most in-demand over the next few years.

Our report reveals that the top three skills generating the highest amount of confidence amongst tech professionals are IT support skills (**39%**), cyber security (**36%**) and cloud technology (**32%**). This reflects the activity we've seen on the CWJobs platform with job applications and postings remaining across these key skill sets.

To stay ahead of the competition, companies need to invest in Learning and Development programmes to ensure employees have the skills that will be needed in the near-future. Customised learning is key to retaining top talent and companies need to invest in ongoing training to inspire commitment. Gathering feedback from workers on the areas they want to upskill in is the first step to providing tailor-made training programmes.

One company that has managed to futureproof itself by developing key skills is UK security company **Meesons**. They developed a strong set of company values and behaviours, which they embedded into their recruitment strategy and new performance framework. By investing in their staff and IT systems, the company increased their profits by **30%** from the previous year.

#### 5. Encourage innovation within your company

Our report finds that **36%** of IT professionals are most confident in the technology that's being produced in the UK – up **2%** from 2019. This echoes the findings of **KPMG's 2019 Technology Hubs Innovation** report, which revealed that the UK is now the third most promising country in the world for technology breakthroughs that have a global impact.



For companies to attract top talent, they need to demonstrate that they encourage innovation. 'Intrapreneurship' within a company offer many benefits, including increasing a company's competitiveness in the marketplace, helping to develop new partnerships and increasing turnover.

Companies can inspire innovation by encouraging employees to carry out research into specific areas that they're interested in. By adopting the ethos that 'there's no such thing as a bad idea', employees will feel they have the freedom to experiment and come up with creative ways to solve problems using technology. Similarly, by rewarding intrapreneurship, companies are more likely to be at the forefront of innovation in their marketplace. [Google](#) famously embraces intrapreneurship by offering their staff a **20%** timeframe on developing personal projects. One such innovation led to the development of Gmail.

## 6. Promote the UK's tech sector and retain top talent

According to [TechNation](#), investments in the UK tech sector soared to £10.1 billion in 2019, making the UK the global leader in tech growth. However, our Index report finds that in 2020, an increasing amount of tech workers are leaving the UK to seek employment abroad. Our report reveals that **19%** of IT professionals say that talent moving abroad is their biggest concern.

A study conducted last year by CWJobs' sister site, [TotalJobs](#), revealed that **75%** of Britain's tech workforce are prepared to leave the UK for work, citing, a healthy work-life balance, positive relationships with their peers and learning and development opportunities as the main reasons.

From a wider perspective, companies should aim to promote the UK tech sector to continue attracting and retaining top talent. Companies should take the opportunity to showcase the benefits of working in one of the UK's tech hubs.

For example [CWJobs UK Tech Hubs](#) report, explains that Manchester is known for its jobs in television, telecoms, biotech, and e-commerce. The city also has a high proportion of 'outstanding' primary and secondary schools, as rated by OFSTED - an attractive prospect for workers with families.

Birmingham, on the other hand, offers jobs in subsectors like internet of things, fintech, games development, medtech, and cyber security. The city has also seen a range of property investments in recent years - a great opportunity for tech professionals to get on the property ladder.

Tech recruiters and hiring managers should also aim to offer attractive relocation packages for workers who are willing to relocate within the UK. Incentives that help cover logistics like moving costs, legal fees, travel costs, and temporary accommodation can be a valuable recruitment tool and demonstrate to potential candidates that the company values top talent and takes care of its employees.

Similarly, companies should showcase their employee benefits, explaining what perks candidates will receive once they settle into their new role. For example, fintech company [Curve](#), gives every member of staff £75 per month as a health and wellbeing budget. They also provide an unlimited book budget, where employees can buy as many books as they want, on the condition that they can be shared with colleagues.

Get our [Confidence Index 2020](#) insights to find out more about the thoughts of the UK's tech workforce about their industry now and in the future.