

How companies are coming up with solutions to screen candidates to reduce hiring time

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HYDERABAD: It may be time to move away from cumbersome resumes as the primary resource when it comes to hiring tech candidates. The future of recruitment may lie in hackathons, which are sessions with specifically designed job-related challenges to test candidates and fill in crucial tech positions on a company's roster.

The process is faster and, of course, they'll eventually look at the CV. Cab aggregator service Ola and real-estate portal Stayzilla had their product management teams put in place by Venturesity, a startup that creates challenges specific to a job description provided by the company. The company plans to introduce an auction-meets-hackathon model, where multiple companies can offer a job to a candidate with a good profile.

"For start-ups and product companies, hiring is yesterday's problem," says Subhendu Panigrahi, co-founder of Venturesity, incorporated in 2013. "We provide the employers a platform to create challenges on par with the actual job role. This brings down the time to hire a candidate to one-third." The startup charges recruiters based on the number of successful hires as well as a subscription fee.

While top companies and well-funded startups have the bandwidth to hire students through campus placements, most don't have the wherewithal to screen 1,000 candidates to hire a team of five. "For traditional campus placement, the hiring pipeline is long and with the lean-bench model companies follow these days, the need to fill positions is immediate," observes Santanu Paul, CEO of TalentSprint, which helps engineering graduates upgrade their IT skills for the job market.

"Two important problems are solved by screening candidates through such challenges - first is to get a candidate who is willing to work for a start-up and the second is to find the right fit, irrespective of the college they are from," says Ramesh Loganathan, a founding member of Headstart Higher, which helps startups hire offline.

A resourceful candidate who has participated in a hackathon is ranked higher by the startups, he says. The organisation plans to connect about 40 startups with 300-plus students at a campus hiring event in Hyderabad in May. The students will showcase their work in various hackathons at the event.

Building a resume outside work or academia is a key factor driving tech hiring in startups, says Sachin Gupta, founder and CEO of HackerEarth, which helps close to 150 companies solve hiring challenges for technical job profiles, charging them based on the number of candidates hired. "Majority of the hiring is done based on pedigree, due to which genuine talent is overlooked.

Our platform helps developers aggregate all their contributions and work on the HackerEarth profile," Gupta says. Incorporated in 2012, HackerEarth is looking to acquire users across geographies to showcase their work on the platform. "The solution is not geography bound and we will look at customer acquisition going ahead in Southeast Asia, US and Eastern Europe.

Recently, we helped InMobi hire a person from Vietnam who was the top in the challenge," says Gupta. The company raised \$620,000 from Angel Prime and GSF Accelerator and is targeting a 30% growth rate month-on-month. Companies are coming up with solutions to screen candidates to reduce hiring time across other industries as well. "There are multiple openings in pharma and medical sectors as well.

We test a candidate's domain knowledge based on their experience - whether beginner, intermediate or expert, across 6,000 different skill requirements," says Ajay Kolla, founder and CEO of Wisdom Jobs, an online hiring database which brings up the selection ratio from 1 in 10 candidates shortlisted to 1 in 3.

The company, incorporated in 2010, is targeting revenue of Rs 40 crore in this financial year. Going ahead, phasing out CVs in favour of a skill-set profile is likely to be the norm for niche job roles, bringing down the screening time for candidates.