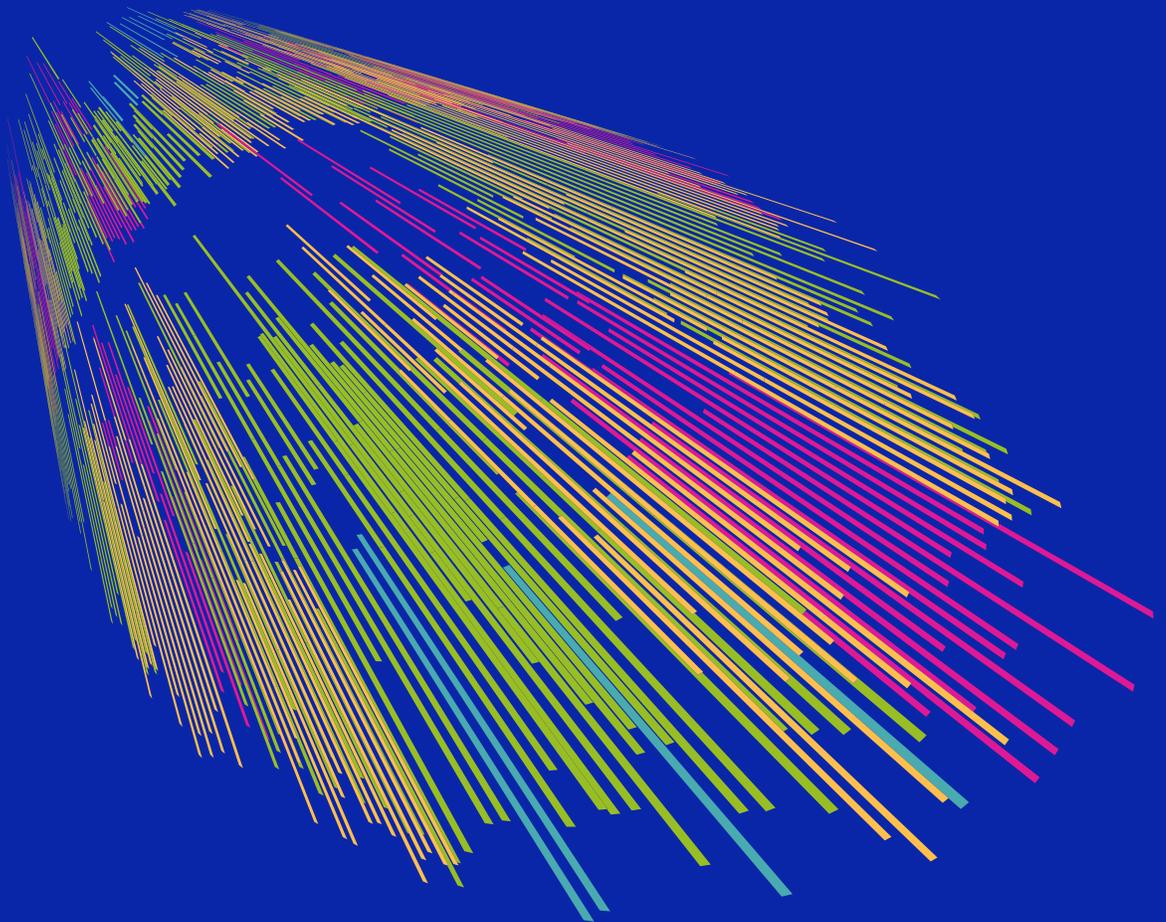# DEBUNKING
DEVELOPER
MYTHS

REPORT - VERSION 1.0

Andela

When HackerRank asked engineers to list their top hiring challenges in 2018, 41% pointed to an overall lack of candidates, while 28% noted a lack of diversity.

Scaling your team with the right developers – and diverse developers – sometimes feels like an impossible task. But it doesn't have to be. It only becomes impossible when we believe common hiring myths to be true. In this report, we debunk the four industry-wide myths that limit high-growth companies from staying competitive in the global fight for technical talent.

1

**The Senior
Developer Myth**

4

2

**The Local
Talent Myth**

7

3

**The Global
Product Myth**

10

4

**The Retention
Myth**

13

Myth

I will be able to scale my team with only senior developers.

Truth

For your team to scale, you need to grow senior talent.

The Senior Developer Myth

HIRING JUNIOR DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF YOUR COMPANY.

Senior developers aren't born. They begin as junior developers who are hired for their potential and given the opportunity to develop their skill set. You'll be hard pressed to find brilliant developers with decades of experience (and an affordable price tag) simply hiding under the radar. What you will find, however, are thousands of smart, driven, and capable young developers ready to lend their skills and fresh perspectives to your company's work. Hiring these junior developers should be viewed as a strategic investment in the future of your company.

It's an investment in the future of the global tech industry as well. Collectively, we need to develop these young minds to fill a growing number of vacant

positions: A report released last year by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine warns that the number of open jobs in the computing industry is already far greater than the number of qualified graduates, resulting in more than a million jobs left unfilled by 2020.

Training young programmers to become strong senior developers should be seen not as an idealistic dream, but as a pragmatic necessity to fuel the rapid growth of the industry. Today's tech companies cannot simply keep trading a small cadre of senior developers—and an even smaller group of diverse senior developers—back and forth among themselves. Instead, we must nurture and mentor junior developers who will form the talent base to power future

growth. Certainly, not all early-stage companies can be called upon to hire less experienced developers, but large companies that can afford to take on junior staff should feel a responsibility to ensure that our industry invests in its future leaders.

"

LARGE COMPANIES THAT CAN AFFORD TO TAKE ON JUNIOR STAFF SHOULD FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT OUR INDUSTRY INVESTS IN ITS FUTURE LEADERS.

Myth

I will be able to find all the best developers locally.

Truth

Successful teams find the best developers wherever they are.

The Local Talent Myth

**THE
PRODUCTIVITY
GAP IS**

800%

**BETWEEN *HIGH
PERFORMERS*
AND *AVERAGE
PERFORMERS* IN
TECHNICALLY
COMPLEX JOBS.**

If your team wants to attract the best talent, then you need to adopt global hiring practices. Companies may be harming themselves by settling for only those candidates who are easy to find and able to work in a local office. In their 2017 book Leading Organizations: Ten Timeless Truths, McKinsey senior partners Scott Keller and Mary Meaney cite a study that found that the productivity gap between "high performers" and "average performers" in technically complex jobs, such as software development, is an astonishing 800 percent. By limiting your search to the most accessible local candidates, you are likely missing out on the dramatic increase in productivity that would come from hiring the highest performers globally.

Though companies often fear that remote employees will be less productive, the opposite has proven to be true: A two-year study conducted by Stanford University found that workers' productivity actually increased by 13% after transitioning to remote work. In addition, they took fewer vacation and sick days, and were more loyal to the company, with employee attrition decreasing by 50% among telecommuters. Overall, the firm's total output increased by nearly 30%, and the company saved about $2,000 per employee each year, thanks to a reduction in office space and reduced turnover.

We are headed toward a more distributed workforce, and companies that reject this trend now will suffer in the long run.

81%

OF DEVELOPERS BELIEVE THAT EMPLOYERS CAN IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE BY ALLOWING REMOTE WORK.

Gallup's 2017 State of the American Workplace found a steady increase in the number of remote workers in recent years, with 43% of employed Americans currently spending at least some time working remotely. This percentage will only increase as the demand for flexibility grows, particularly in the tech industry. HackerRank's 2018 report found that nearly 81% of developers believe that employers can improve work-life balance by allowing remote work. With an ever-increasing supply of tools to support remote workers — Slack, Trello, Google suite, Dropbox, Zoom, and more — the barriers to a distributed workforce are decreasing every day. It's only fitting that the tech industry, where nearly all of these platforms originated, should lead the way.

Myth

I will be able to build global products with my local team.

Truth

I will build global products by hiring a global team.

The Global Product Myth

THE QUICKEST WAY TO ENSURE THAT ONLY ONE GROUP USES YOUR TOOL IS TO HAVE ONLY ONE GROUP BUILD IT. A GLOBAL TEAM CAN CREATE A PRODUCT WITH GLOBAL APPEAL.

Though many companies only pay lip service to the importance of diversity, we now know that representation of all genders, races, and ethnicities is a smart financial investment. A 2018 McKinsey report found that gender and ethnic diversity among senior management is linked to company profitability — and the importance of this diversity is growing. In 2014, organizations in the top quartile for gender diversity among executives were 15% more likely to report above-average profitability than companies in the lowest quartile. By 2017, this number climbed to 21%. Similarly, companies with the most ethnic diversity on their leadership teams are 33% more likely to outperform their less diverse counterparts. For developers looking to create new platforms with broad usage, the benefits of diversity are even

more crucial: The quickest way to ensure that only one group uses your tool is to have only one group build it. A global team can create a product with global appeal.

Yet recruiting and retaining a diverse team remains a challenge. It is a distressing reality that talented individuals of different ethnicities, nationalities, genders and socioeconomic statuses are not given the same opportunities to learn and grow, nor do they have the same access to recruiters and companies when they are searching for jobs. Therefore, it falls upon industry leaders to find potential candidates of all backgrounds, requiring them to look beyond our often homogeneous communities, and even beyond our borders. Africa, for example, holds the largest pool of untapped human capital in the

world, with more than 1.2 billion inhabitants. Companies like Andela are aiming to bridge the gap between the most talented developers on the African continent and engineering hiring managers across the globe.

Myth

Any team can retain
the best diverse
developer talent.

Truth

Diverse teams retain
the best diverse talent.

The Retention Myth

**DIVERSITY
IS LINKED
TO OVERALL
RETENTION;**

69%

**OF WORKERS
AT DIVERSE
ORGANIZATIONS
INTENDED TO
STAY BEYOND
FIVE YEARS.**

Employees want to feel a sense of belonging. This can be difficult to foster if they are the sole female developer, or the only person of color, on their teams. Gender, racial, and ethnic diversity must exist at all levels of a company for team members to feel that their personal growth and success is attainable. McKinsey's 2018 report hypothesizes that more diverse companies are better able to attract talent, enjoy higher levels of employee satisfaction, and exhibit improved decision making. Deloitte's 2018 study of millennials from 36 different countries found that diversity is linked to overall retention rates and employee loyalty. Among workers in their twenties and thirties, 69% of those at diverse organizations said they intended to stay at their company beyond five years, compared to a mere 27% of respondents in non-diverse workplaces. Similarly, greater diversity among senior management contributed to a 26% increase in employees' perception of their work environments as motivating and stimulating. Talented developers come from a variety of backgrounds, and the best way to retain them — while also avoiding the high costs of frequent turnover — is to invest in a diverse team from top-to-bottom.

Conclusion

The simple truth is that you won't be able to successfully scale your team if you're only looking for the most senior talent and only searching in your own backyard. The future of our workforce is distributed, and successful teams will be those that embrace, rather than ignore, this truth.

Andela has helped more than 150 companies embrace distributed work by scaling their engineering teams with the top developers from the African continent.

Find out how Andela can help you hire smarter, faster – different.
andela.com