

# **STAFF AUGMENTATION 2.0: SOFTWARE OUTSOURCING THAT BUILDS STRONGER TEAMS**

**F**inding top software developers is extremely challenging for all businesses. Deep-pocketed tech giants offer high salaries and luxe benefits to attract the best engineers, leaving smaller companies and those outside tech hubs with few resources. As talent supplies shriveled and hiring times dragged on, many have turned to staff augmentation firms for temporary support with engineers from regions where talent is plentiful but where opportunities are scarce—to complete projects or fill short-term skill gaps.

As software development becomes more and more of a team sport, and teams are only as good as the lowest-performing member, some staff augmentation models' limitations have become apparent. Inconsistent quality and a short-term, individual-contributor focus have proven to be ill-suited for fast-moving teams developing complex products that require a long-term investment.

A new form of staff augmentation—call it Staff Augmentation 2.0— has emerged to help CTOs quickly and cost-effectively build and grow high-performing engineering teams with FTE-like developers from untapped regions of the world. The shift to remote work due to the COVID-19 crisis has made global talent even more accessible as teams are more comfortable and skilled at distributed engineering.

This e-book outlines the essential components of Staff Augmentation 2.0 and the benefits that these firms offer engineering leaders:

- Access to a Global Talent Pool
- Long-term, Embedded Engagements
- 360 Degree Vetting and Intelligent Matching
- Hands-On and Tech-Enabled Support



# ACCESS TO A GLOBAL TALENT POOL

The plain truth is that the majority of English-speaking engineers in the world live outside of the United States, often in overlooked geographies like Africa, which is the fastest-growing continent for developers. And never mind that the United States ranked 28th in HackerRank's ranking of countries with the best engineers.

A combination of global education and training initiatives, expanded Internet access, cloud computing, and agile methodology have created vast new talent pools and the tools and processes to enable them to work together. Staff Augmentation 2.0 makes this broader and deeper talent pool available and accelerates matching engineers with the companies that need them.

It is also becoming more and more important and valuable for development teams to expand their cultural diversity. In a global economy, it is critical that products benefit from international development that removes bias and improves product inclusiveness and usability worldwide. Diverse teammates bring diverse perspectives, experiences, and approaches to software and product development that can accelerate velocity and improve product quality.



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# LONG-TERM, EMBEDDED ENGAGEMENTS

While Staff Augmentation 1.0 focused on transactional short-term gap-filling projects, Staff Augmentation 2.0 recognizes companies' needs for full-time, long-term, high-performing teammates. This type of full-time, long-term work is what software teams need and what the best engineers want.

The digital revolution has made software mission-critical for internal operations and external products for just about every type of business, requiring skilled engineers for every phase of development. Finding these engineers drove Staff Augmentation 1.0. But today's software platforms are continuously improving and evolving and demand ongoing development and are poor fits for temporary work. Also, the components of software products from design to QA are interrelated and require teamwork and collaboration that grows over time as the products evolve.

The opportunity to work with high-performing teams on challenging, long-term products are

also the kind of engagements that the best global engineers are looking for—to work with leading companies that are solving big problems. Few are interested in low-value, repetitive gigs. Long-term work gives engineers better financial stability, career development, and the ability to see big projects through to completion. Engineers relish the opportunity to work with great companies as they build their careers—opportunities that aren't available in their geographies.

Staff Augmentation 2.0 recognizes that businesses need talent that is not available in local markets, and provides that talent without the time, disruption, and HR overhead, associated with hiring and managing a full-time employee. The line between full-time employees and outsourced engineers is becoming an artificial one. When engineers are fully embedded with a client team for months or years, the main difference between those engineers and their teammates is who pays them.

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# 360 DEGREE VETTING AND INTELLIGENT MATCHING

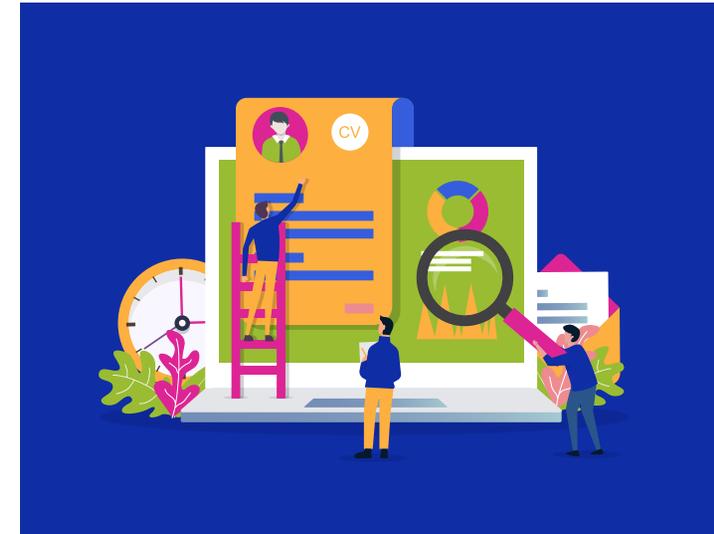
Engineering teams are renowned for their assessment of tech skills. Coding challenges, pair programming, and other competency evaluations are standard in the hiring process. Developers get slotted into roles based on a combination of years of experience and the results of technical assessments. But software development increasingly requires non-tech skills like creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and collaboration to implement novel solutions.

Staff Augmentation 2.0 provides more rigorous, 360-degree assessments that measure leadership and communication skills and technical skills. So-called soft skills are now considered essential skills for software teams, and Staff Augmentation 2.0 evaluates engineers based on a combination of technical and professional skills. Professional skills include values-based capabilities like adherence to architecture standards, documentation,

engagement, responsibility, time management, effective communication, and teamwork.

Professional skills are especially important for remote engineers, as they often need to take the initiative to include themselves in conversations. They also need to have the confidence to speak up—when they need help, see something that doesn't look right, and when they think someone else might need help. Also, because the engagements are longer, and the engineers work closely with client teams, engineers must be willing and able to embrace and contribute to the client teams' culture.

Staff Augmentation 2.0 aims to deliver skills and deliver teammates that will augment team performance and culture. Delivering great teammates requires a more sophisticated, intelligent matching of engineers with opportunities that will be rewarding for the clients and the developers.





# HANDS-ON AND TECH-ENABLED SUPPORT

The quality and consistency issues associated with Staff Augmentation 1.0 are often due to the fact that in this model an agency provides a freelance engineer and that is all. The developer is on his or her own. If there are code quality issues, or if the engineer needs additional help understanding user stories, the client must a) detect these problems and b) manage to resolve them. This often leads to lower development velocity as code needs to be refactored and managers must spend time guiding the engineer.

Staff Augmentation 2.0 uses people and technology to support engineers before and during engagements—reducing the management burden and cost to the client. It is laser-focused on ensuring that engineers have everything needed to be successful and that clients are getting the performance they expect. Again, the emphasis is on helping teams succeed, not on just placing engineers.

The human support comes in the form of an engineering management “team behind the team” that holds regular check-ins with engineers and clients to monitor progress and performance. Managers have access to sprint tracking tools to spot potential issues in advance and prevent them from impacting development.

Clients get a dedicated Team Lead or Engineering Manager that ensures work is being done to the client’s standards, that engineers are unblocked, and that the user stories are clear. Support for engineers includes IT and tech support and career development and growth opportunities to encourage job satisfaction and retention within the staff augmentation firm. The engineering managers also gain institutional and product knowledge that will accelerate onboarding if an engineer needs to be replaced.



## Hands-On and Tech-Enabled Support (cont'd)

Engineering managers also use data to measure performance. Data-based assessments use technology to measure the quality of work to establish results-based performance management. Metrics that can be measured include:

- **New Code:** Brand new code that does not replace other code written for new features
- **Legacy Refactor:** Code that updates or edits old code that required rework
- **Churn:** Code which is deleted or rewritten shortly after being written
- **Help Others:** Code where a developer modifies someone else's recent work
- **Efficiency:** The percentage of all contributed code which is productive

Measuring productivity with data makes assessments more objective and builds trust between engineers and clients. Concrete outcomes replace speculation and assumptions about how developers perform and enable teams to show improvement over time.

# WORKING WITH ANDELA

At Andela, we know that you are only as good as your people. Andela partners with high-growth companies including GitHub, Percolate, and Coursera to quickly and cost-effectively build brilliant distributed engineering teams at scale. We recruit, onboard, manage, and pay senior software engineers that seamlessly integrate with your team, operating as full-time members, and using your software development tools, SDLC, and processes. Core competencies span web and mobile development as well as QA, DevOps, and roles in data engineering. We have strong expertise in JavaScript and its various frameworks (React, React Native, Angular, Vue, and Node), Python, Java, Ruby, PHP, Android, iOS, Golang, Scala, and Elixir among others.

Get in touch with us to learn more about how Andela can help you hire developers and accelerate your product development.

