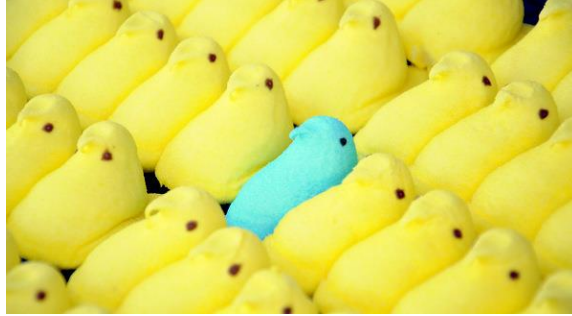# It's All About The Peeps

Hiring and Retaining High Performing Teams

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Today's Presentation:

– Build the Right Team for *You*

– Interview Questions You Need to Ask

– Market Mindshift – Candidates are Interviewing *You*

  • *How to "Think Like a Recruiter" and sell the perfect candidate!*

– Become the Company They Can't Say No to

– I've Got a Great Team – Now What?

Question for the room:
What are you hoping to get
out of today's session?

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About Kirk

- Over 15 years' experience in Tech Recruiting

- Established the Recruiting Practice at tap|QA in 2012

- Currently Director of Marketing and Business Development for tap|QA

- Hired over 500 IT professionals / consultants throughout career… and interviewed hundreds more.
  - *My passion is helping others find a job they are passionate about!*

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Let's take 3 minutes:

- Please pair up with a neighbor you don't know

- Discuss the following questions:

  - What is your biggest hiring challenge here in 2019?

  - Why do you think that is?

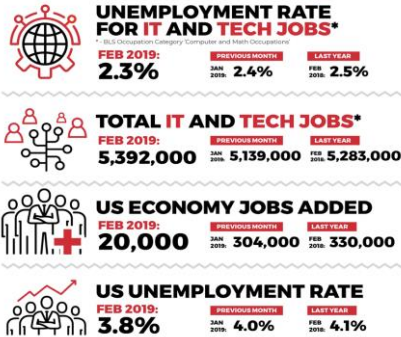 - Who's going to win the Final Four next weekend? (it's in Minneapolis!)

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So, the market is pretty good right now….

IT AND TECHNOLOGY JOBS REPORT — FEB 2019

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR IT AND TECH JOBS*
* - BLS Occupation Category 'Computer and Math Occupations'
FEB 2019: **2.3%**   PREVIOUS MONTH JAN 2019: **2.4%**   LAST YEAR FEB 2018: **2.5%**

TOTAL IT AND TECH JOBS*
FEB 2019: **5,392,000**   PREVIOUS MONTH JAN 2019: **5,139,000**   LAST YEAR FEB 2018: **5,283,000**

US ECONOMY JOBS ADDED
FEB 2019: **20,000**   PREVIOUS MONTH JAN 2019: **304,000**   LAST YEAR FEB 2018: **330,000**

US UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
FEB 2019: **3.8%**   PREVIOUS MONTH JAN 2019: **4.0%**   LAST YEAR FEB 2018: **4.1%**

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- With the market being hot, demand for IT professionals is at an all-time high.

- Competition for IT Talent today is as fierce as it was in the mid-to-late 1990's, where it was amazingly cutthroat.

- Candidates on the market routinely get multiple offers from prospective employers.

- The political climate and uncertainty surrounding the H1B and H4EAD programs contribute to the anxiety around hiring IT professionals as well.
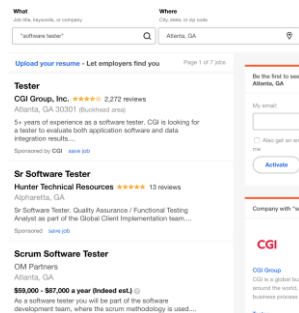
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In particular, QA / Testing roles are hotter than ever.

- The more software and technology runs our daily lives, the bigger the need to ensure that software works.

- QA roles are being viewed so much more importantly than ever before.
  (https://www.tapqa.com/2019/01/18/the-market-for-software-qa-professionals-has-never-been-hotter/)

- If technology doesn't work, the **world** knows.
  - _Ex: Healthcare.gov, App Store ratings, etc_
  - _Social media magnifies issues_

- Current openings for "Software Tester" on Indeed:
  - Minneapolis, MN: 5 Pages of jobs
  - San Fran Bay Area: 6 pages of jobs
  - Atlanta, GA: 7 Pages of jobs
  - New York, NY: 11 Pages of jobs
  - Seattle, WA: 15 Pages of jobs
  - Omaha, NE: **16** pages of jobs!

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"So if the market is so tough,
how do I find great people?
How do I build a great team?"

LOWER YOUR STANDARDS

(*just kidding*)

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Building Your Team in the Hottest Market Ever:

- Despite everything we just talked about - don't panic!
    - *No matter how hot the market is, the #1 priority is still making a hire that fits.*
    - *Don't compromise on soft skills just to bring in a candidate that seemingly has the hard skills – no matter how hard the market is*
    - *Don't "chase the resume" while ignoring other reasons why a candidate may not be a fit for your team and organization long-term*

- Don't let "years" be the indicator for a decision to interview / hire
    - *Aptitude and attitude can be far more important than experience in a tight labor market*
    - *Determine the absolute minimum skillset / experience one needs, and then interview for how quickly someone can pick something up + soft skills vs holding out for someone with the years of experience (but may not fit in other ways)*
    - *Find a diamond in the rough - and potentially help the budget!*

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Building Your Team in the Hottest Market Ever:

- Use Science!
  - *There are outstanding assessment tools that can dive deep into a candidates behaviors, motivations, aptitude for learning, and soft skills – these are **critical** to finding the ideal fit for your team – regardless of tech experience*
  - *Create an "Ideal Candidate" profile – and then see how a candidate matches it*
  - *Examples: Predictive Index, ClearFit, Myers-Briggs, Insights*
  - *Check with your HR Department what tools they may have*

- But don't forget about tech experience – and validating a resume
  - *"Professional Resume Writing" is a thing – it's easy to fall into the "buzzword trap"*
  - *In-person tech interviews are almost always better than tools – but there are some decent tools to use in a pinch*
  - *Examples: HackerRank, Codility*

- What about an intern program?
  - *A great way to hire! Many companies will be open to this.*

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7 Killer (yet simple) Questions You need to ask:

1. "What are you ideally looking for in your next position?"
   - *This question should reveal most **everything** and sets the stage for the whole interview.*
   - *This gives you a great initial indication into whether this person will be a fit, or could be a potential mismatch.*

2. "What is the #1 reason you are looking to leave your current role?"
   - *This question will allow you to gain further insight into what the candidate is looking for, but also allows you to see if your current role is a potential mismatch in that it's too similar to what they are leaving.*
   - *This also gives you a look into their truest motivation, if that wasn't revealed by the first question.*
   - *Additionally, when you ask a "negative" question, you can also see if the candidate responds negatively, giving you insight into their attitude and if they could be a potential problem.*

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7 Killer (yet simple) Questions You need to ask:

3. "What's the biggest difference between where you are today from where you were 3-5 years ago?"
   – *__Every__ candidate should be able to walk through their growth from the past few years. If they can't, you can't expect too much future growth.*
   – *This could, of course, be fine for certain roles… but usually not preferable.*

4. "Tell me about the most fun you've ever had at a job."
   – *This should give insight into two things:*
     • *More about what motivates the candidate, and what they feel is a particular strength (if they answer the question with a skill or accomplishment)*
     • *How this person will be with their co-workers – both in work and outside of work*
     • *Also shows you care about the person's well-being at work*

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7 Killer (yet simple) Questions You need to ask:

5. "What is the best thing you've learned in the past year?"
   – *This ties into Question 3 but it asks it in a different way:*
     • *It continues to help reveal what one's passions and interests are.*
     • *You can see if a candidate is a lifelong learner – and one that will bring more upside to your organization.*
     • *It also reveals some interests and abilities that may not be apparent on their resume – and the potential of a candidate being able to take on work down the road that would really benefit the company (It almost always benefits to promote from within rather than hire someone from outside)*

6. "What's the most useful piece of constructive criticism you've ever received?"
   – *Reveals a number of things:*
     • *It's a better way of asking, and discovering, one's biggest weakness.*
     • *If they don't have a great (or any) answer for this, it could be a warning sign.*
     • *It allows the candidate to answer the question, but also elaborate on what they've done since receiving that criticism (which they should have done)*

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7 Killer (yet simple) Questions You need to ask:

7. "One year from now, you and I will be walking down this hall having a conversation about the past year. What will we be talking about?"

– *It's important to understand what one's expectations are of the role – now and in the future.*
– *This question reveals what a candidate anticipates their first year will be like. If the answer they give paints a picture that is significantly different than what you feel the role will be, it might be a big warning sign.*
– *Side product of this question: It might give the candidate a chance to give a creative answer, show a sense of humor, or give them a chance to reveal just how interested they are in the position – which is a good sign!*

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You found the perfect candidate! Now what?

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Time to "Think Like a Recruiter!"

- Market Mindshift – Candidates are Interviewing *You* as much as you are interviewing them.
  - *Always start every interview trying to "rule a candidate out", but once you rule them in, the game changes.*
  - *Once you know you have a great candidate – start selling!*
  - *Use their "hot buttons" revealed in the interview*
  - *Why does your company meet those hot buttons? Lock those thoughts into your candidate's mind*
  - *Q * A * R (Question * Answer * Respond)*

- Candidate experience is paramount in this market
  - *Always assume the person sitting with you is sitting with others as well*
  - *Everybody involved in the process needs to be committed to the candidate enjoying and appreciating the interview process – it's what they will remember*
  - *If your tech interviewers like the candidate, they need to start selling as well*
  - *What makes your company unique? Benefits? Work-life balance? Great culture?*

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Time to "Think Like a Recruiter!"

- Utilize all the resources you have to stand out from the competition!
  - *Connect on LinkedIn – add the extra touch with a follow-up to the candidate (not many others will) – or send an email / thank you card*
  - *Utilize your company's social media – especially Glassdoor (if the ratings are good) and Facebook / Instagram / etc – show off why you should be their employer!*
  - *Enlist your team members to connect with the candidate. Get them to talk about why they love the company. The more touch points the better!*

- Ask yourself one question: "Why do I love working here so much?"
  - *Your personal experiences and your passion for the company **WILL** come through in an interview – SHARE those with your candidate*
  - *Be genuine. Be personal. Candidates want to work for a company they can be passionate about. Along with their hot buttons, share your own hot buttons and why you love working where you work… and why*

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Your team is great.
How do you ensure they stay?

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It all starts in the first day / week / month

- Develop an onboarding calendar
  - *Specific activities for Day 1, 15, 30, 60, 90, 120, etc*
  - *When meeting, always refer back to the individual's hot buttons, and make sure you are meeting them... or find out if they've changed?*

- Start onboarding before they get there
  - *If possible, invite them to company or team get-togethers*
  - *Share details on events that the company are doing – especially volunteer events!*
  - *Be sure to send out any accomplishments that a company may have achieved*

- Assign a Mentor or "Buddy" for the first 120 days
  - *This person doesn't need to be on the same team, but someone who you see as a "Champion" of the company that can help the individual feel more at home*
  - *This doesn't have to be extensive – a monthly coffee will suffice*

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Retention strategies for the long haul

- Continue to ensure hot buttons are being met
  - *Highly ambitious, voracious learners could get bored in a hurry – and hot buttons will change*
- Promote "passion projects" among the team
  - *Encourage team members to do things that could benefit the company while giving them a bit of a break from work monotony*
- Keep an eye on work-life balance
  - *High achievers tend to take on a ton of work, and can experience "burn out" with little warning*
- Do 2-3 (or more) team get-togethers a year
  - *Volunteer events are awesome ways to give back to the community while building team unity – and making your company a brand they can be proud of*
- ALWAYS say thanks, and show how much people are appreciated!
  - *Develop events like "Thank You Thursdays" – where one member of the team makes a public thank you to another member of the team.*
  - *Create a "Culture of Praise" instead of a culture of blame / deflection*

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Would you like to chat about hiring strategies further over Hibachi?

Please join Jennifer and me tonight for dinner at Benihana at 7:30! Meet us after the Q&A for details!

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Q & A

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Please email me with any questions you have, and let's connect on LinkedIn!

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Look for the tap|QA Booth at the expo tomorrow!
Please stop by and chat with us!

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