

5 unique skills to look for in a software developer

Software development is a skill set that includes front-end developers, back-end developers, full-stack developers, web developers, mobile developers and more. Each specialization contains their own set of skills needed to make a good developer. But it's the following list of unique skills that sets the great developers apart. These skills can't be determined through a hacker rank or another test, but through a one-on-one interview.



1. A quick learner. This is key when hiring a developer. Find someone who can pick up on new technologies quickly to elevate your whole team. When a candidate has this ability, their experience doesn't have to be perfect, or a binary match to your job description. Quick learning is a skill you can't teach. But, solid coding knowledge will also make it easier for a quick learner to add tools to their development tool belt.



2. Continually educate themselves. A candidate who furthers their knowledge will benefit your team more than one who isn't. What they did two to three years ago is more than likely outdated now. You need someone entrenched in the coding community and talking shop with their fellow coding aficionados. You want someone who takes a Kaizen (Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement of working practices, personal efficiency, etc.) approach to their trade. They're constantly coming up with new solutions to problems, sharing knowledge and gathering takeaways from colleagues.



3. A jack of all trades. A good software developer, no matter their specialization, should have a basic, big picture understanding of how everything works together. This enables them to see the entire picture and how they contribute to the end goal. In addition, a developer worth hiring should know basic business logic. In the past, this wasn't a key skill for developers. But in today's environment, it's critical. A way to test if a candidate will be a good fit is to have them describe their previous projects and, more importantly, where they fit into the larger business strategy.



4. Methodology and process guru. You want to hire someone who fits into your project methodology. If your team operates using the Agile methodology, you want a developer who has extensive experience in that world. If they've only worked in a Waterfall environment, they're going to have difficulty thriving. Many organizations have their own flavor of Scrum, Agile, etc. so you want to talk to the candidate about how your company operates and how that aligns with their experience.



5. Lone wolf or team player. This depends on your open role. If you're looking for a developer to work on their own to create a product or solution, common in small companies, you may need someone who can work and thrive solo. On the other hand, if you're looking for a developer to contribute to the overall solution, you'll need someone who plays nice on a team. A team requires someone who can learn and grow from their teammates. When a developer has primarily worked on individual projects, it can be hard for them to break away from that lone-wolf mentality, so make sure you know beforehand.