Turning humans into developers in a post-Covid world
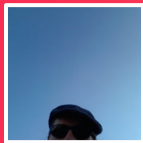
… and making sure they stay humans, too

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Question policy

Please hold questions until the end.

Who of you is a developer?

Who of you has trained as a developer?

Apprenticeships in Germany

- Lasts 3 years
- Find a company, go to work
- Go to school
- Often no prior tech knowledge
- Company decides what tech you learn

Should you train developers?

Why train?

Can't find developers

- Small hiring pool
- People won't change languages
- Unappealing location

Make your own

- Lots of people want to be developers
- Don't have an opinion on Perl
- Cannot be picky yet

What level should we hire?

- Straight out of school
- (STEM) graduates
- Bootcamp graduates
- Junior devs with 1 or 2 years of experience
- Career changer

Preparations

- Clear interview process
- Exact specification of the role
- Work contract needs to be clear
- Budget

Do you have to fill the role now?

Setting expectations

Team
- Open mind
- Patience
- Willingness to explain

Management
- Someone needs to train them
- Return of investment takes time

Stakeholders
- More discussions
- Get low-priority features

Hiring at entry level

Sourcing candidates

- Your company website
- LinkedIn, Indeed will often scrape them anyway
- Lots of people want to get into tech!

Interviewing

"Classic Interview"
- One hour
- People team involved
- Generic technical questions
- Determine if they have the right attitude`

Technical Challenge
- No homework!
- Do it with them
- A couple of hours
- Make it feel like work

Onboarding new people

- Starting remotely is the new normal
- Make sure they feel connected
- Give them support

Training and Mentoring

Developer->new(name => "Julien");

Think back to your very first day on your first job.

Developer->new(name => "Julien");

Think back to your very first day on your first job.

Were you looking forward to the second?

A shift to hybrid working

- Many companies don't go to the office any more
- Your hiring pool is much bigger
- For career starters this sounds great, but isn't always

Mentoring from home

Your roles as a mentor

- Teacher
- Manager
- Boss
- Role Model
- Motivator
- Parent
- Friend

How do I do that from home?

- Be available
- Help them help themselves
- Be patient
- Give advice that goes further than just work

Training from home

Staying connected

- Daily Standup
- Code Reviews
- Pair Programming: VSCode Live Share, Screen Sharing

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Don't overdo it

- Don't schedule calls back to back
- Don't force them to turn video on

Leading from home

Motivation

- Their work matters
- Keep people engaged with interesting work
- Listen to their problems

How to keep track?

- The Calendar is your friend
- Take notes

- Weekly Catch-up Meetings
- Monthly Progression Meetings

Developing people

Questions new trainees might have

- What is expected of me?
- How do I know if I am good at my job?
- How am I doing?
- What do I need to do to get even better?
- How long is the "training program"?
- When do I get harder things to do?
- Why should I stay here?

Challenges when training

- The beginning of their career is scary
- It's not clear what is expected of them
- You can't compare or measure how they're learning
- Keeping track of a team is hard
- If your team is only used to experienced people, juniors could seem "bad"

What is a career progression framework?

Structural document to help employees understand expectations of their roles.

It clearly defines:

- Skills
- Roles
- What's needed to advance
- How that is measured

It doesn't provide:

- a rating system
- a list of hard requirements
- checkboxes to tick

Core characteristics

- **Mastery**
  Domain knowledge and technical capability

- **Impact**
  The size, scope and value of what they deliver

- **Influence**
  How they positively impact the work environment

- **Communication**
  How they interact with others

- **Leadership**
  How people around them become better and more impactful

Levels of Progression

- Probation period
- Trainee Software Developer
- Junior Software Developer
- Leaving the Trainee Team
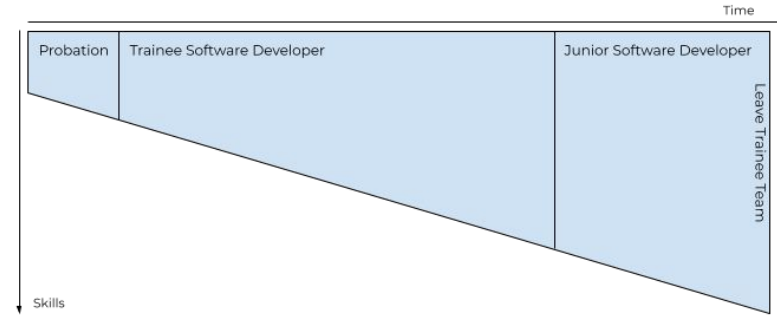
Probation Period

- The first few months at Oleeo
- Settling in
- Learning basic coding (Perl/JS)
- Using the development environment
- Tutorials and some tickets
- Work very closely with the Mentor

Trainee Software Developer

- Longest stage in the progression
- Complexity and size of tickets gradually improves
- Build confidence in technical and communication skills
- Work closely with the mentor for both planning as well as concrete implementation questions

Junior Software Developer

- Become more self-reliant and take ownership
- Think about the bigger picture
- Trust their tech skills and make decisions on their own
- Communicate with technical and non-technical people
- Need less help and know when not to ask for support immediately
- Help others, in particular more junior team members

Leaving the Trainee Team

- Integrated in day to day operations
- Work independently
- The team trusts them
- Move out of the Trainee team

Common remote-first challenges

Personal challenges

- Career starters often don't have good home office space
- Working from home is lonely and disconnected
- You need to be "encouraged" to make friends

Communication challenges

- Afraid to ask questions
- Think chat interrupts others
- Large chat room loses questions, but messaging the wrong person directly wastes time
- People don't know who in the team can help them

Skill challenges

- You cannot watch other people work
- You cannot overhear other people talking about their work problems
- You don't pick up on what professionalism in a work environment looks like

Thank you!

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Questions?