

Why bringing on the right team for your tech startup is critical

By [Michael Bowren](#)

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Applying the saying 'you are the average of the five people you spend the most time around' has a direct effect on your company culture, work ethics, and performance. This is why finding the 'right' team for your startup is crucial - and for tech especially, it's the missing piece of code. Let's explore some key characteristics that employees should look out for.



Michael Bowren, co-founder of Finch Technologies, Fincheck | image supplied

Complementary skills and performance

An important aspect of any hiring process is determining the skillset and performance of a candidate. It's important here not to dismiss someone because they haven't studied coding, design or marketing – the potential to perform is just as much of an asset.

In addition to that, a tech team that complements each other is what drives innovation and success. This doesn't mean that your team will have similar outlooks or skills, but rather that they can mesh well with other team members with varying views.

In tech, this is even more important, as employers can easily fall into the trap of hiring people with similar skills to increase a certain output – avoid this at all costs. It's about the people you work with and this unique team working towards a common vision.

Diversity and culture – the ultimate draw factor

In order to reduce 'group think', diversity needs to be a cornerstone of your hiring process. In every aspect – be that the age, gender, race or even hobbies. In the same breath ensure your leaders represent the demographic of your country and its needs, as this gives employees someone to look up to.

With 66% of leadership positions held by men in South Africa compared to 34% of women, there is a great need for change in this sector – not just from an ethical point of view, but because it affects profitability. According to Fundera, highly gender-diverse executive teams are 21% more likely to outperform on profitability.

Every tech startup says they want to be the next Google, but how can you put this into action? Create a company culture that your team want to be a part of.



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According to LinkedIn, 40% of professionals looking for a job prioritise their colleagues and culture when making their final decision.

Company culture speaks to the work ethics of its leaders. Placing importance on creating a great culture improves well-being.

What can leaders do?

Win over your candidates at the right time!

When you head to the market you need to take the view of winning over that employee with your company vision and culture, not only the job offer. It's safe to assume that the potential employees are in discussions with multiple companies.

Bringing on the right team member at the right time saves you a lot of friction. If you hire too slowly, your company output will be too slow as certain team members will feel stretched. If you hire too quickly, you will be spending capital on an under-resourced individual, who won't have enough work to do and might feel unfulfilled. Timing in hiring is everything.

Manage the risk of 'a key individual'

As a tech startup, one of the first risks that you will experience is that of a 'key individual'. Keep working towards not being reliant on one or two people, no matter their level in the company.

In order to mitigate against this, you need to keep growing your employee and technology base in order to handle business

growth. With tech start-ups, this easily happens when building a lean team from the foundation up. However, once your company budget can allow it, expand your core team departments and allow for more open collaboration so that you are not left in the dark should anything happen.

Retain and grow top performers

To ensure a low churn rate, in an industry that generally hires young top performers – make sure growth and learning are key parts of the retention recipe. One way of doing this is balance - you want to create an environment that catapults productivity but doesn't create pressure where staff feel obliged to work long hours.

Young tech candidates are generally inclined to be part of a company for a year or two, after which time they feel their learning stagnates. Tech companies in South Africa need to put focus on job role evolution to continue building their team. 89% of job seekers globally saw the value of professional development opportunities in improving company culture.

By spending time and energy on finding the 'right' tech team, you'll see a significant shift in the output of your startup.

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