Introduction

The not-so-straightforward act of engaging tech talent eludes many a recruiter. When it comes to passive candidates, the initial contact is where recruiters often fall short, getting lost in a sea of other spammy-sounding messages that do nothing to prompt a response. And how can you succeed in hiring if you can't even get these potential candidates to open a message

https://insights.dice.com/employer-resource-center/10-dos-donts-messaging-passive-tech-talent/

DO NOT: Send Mass Mail or Similar Look

Send out something that resembles a mass email (or anything that makes it seem like they are one of many candidates receiving your message). Passive tech professionals are hard at work; they're busy and tend to be aware of their value. The candidates you want are not interested in being lumped in with others like them.

DO NOT: Send Traditional Job Descriptions

Send your passive candidates a traditional job description or any kind of attachment that you expect them to review. The key word here is "passive." These tech professionals probably have jobs, maybe even ones they like. Once you have their attention, skip the standard protocol and jump into the specifics of the role.

DO NOT

Ask them to check out your career site or to apply online. This niche talent pool gets a slew of messages every day, all encouraging them to check out [insert generic job post] and apply online [through a lengthy application process]. Don't be that person.

DO NOT

Ask tech talent if they're a rock star, ninja or superstar. They are. Otherwise, you wouldn't be going out of your way to talk to them in hopes of landing your next hire (especially if they are currently working). Plus, they have certainly heard all these clichés before, probably more than once. Chances are, it didn't work back then, and it won't work now.

DO NOT Overwelm

Overwhelm tech talent from the start. Yes, we know you have a lot to say, but if you expect a reply to your first and only message, you will probably end up disappointed. Pending the potential for multiple follow-ups, save some details for a later date.

DO: Some Preparation

Some preparation. Scripting a fill-in-the-blank mass message will get you nowhere. Instead, read up on the role in question, have the right conversations with your hiring managers, and talk to people in similar positions to learn about their specific responsibilities. Be sure to draw on this information when you sit down to write. Tech roles do not come one-size-fits-all, and neither can your communication style.

DO: Practice personalization

Practice personalization. If you want to get in the door, start by acknowledging who the candidate is and what they do—and be exact. Demonstrate that you understand their skills and abilities. Show your purple squirrels that you're willing to put their growth before you and your organization's needs. Work to pique their interest and elicit a reply.

DO: Show Flexibility

Show some flexibility. Should one of these passive tech candidates follow up about an opening, try and move them through the process without the usual hoop-jumping on their end. Circumvent your standard procedure and accelerate the process by scheduling a phone screen, video interview or whatever is next. Just grab a résumé and go.

DO: Skip the platitudes

Skip the platitudes. Tech candidates will see right through you. Rather than babying these grown adults already out in the workforce, call out shared connections or mutual interests. Look for something that will actually move the conversation forward and give them a reason to interact with you—this is Relationship Building 101.

DO: Adapt your message

Adapt your message to your medium. Maybe you intend to email; perhaps you plan to Tweet. Either way, create an outline highlighting your strongest points before hitting "Send." Tailor each message for the channel you're using and edit down as necessary. Cross-post if you must.