

Careers at Votizen

This packet is designed to provide:

1. An [Overview](#) of Votizen
2. [What We're Looking For](#) in team members
3. [What We Offer](#) in a career
4. The [Process](#) we use to find good matches to join our team

Overview

Our Mission

Our mission is to create a new political currency based on voter-to-voter connections, reducing the influence of money and increasing the importance of relationships in civic engagement.

Our Vision

We don't believe a broken system is capable of fixing itself. Change must come from outside. Social media are disrupting politics in profound ways, creating a new model for civic engagement.

At Votizen we recognize this and are helping invert the political system, putting voters back into the position of power and influence. Our members already have millions of friends in their existing personal networks. We simply identify and connect those who are the most active voters and bring them together, voter-to-voter, based on common interests. This data- and relationship-driven approach makes voters not passive targets of carefully crafted messages, but active participants in a connected election.

Business Model

We are a network-effect business; the more voters that participate in the system, the more valuable the overall system becomes. Network effect businesses are difficult to establish, but once built they are immensely valuable (Facebook, eBay, and LinkedIn are other examples of network-effect businesses). Politics is a \$10B a year industry that has grown 25% per year for fifty straight years; all of the industry's future growth will take place on the political graph and we are going to be at the center of that market.

What We're Looking For

Votizen is looking for strong engineers to work on building new features and products related to the Votizen website and API. Candidates must have experience in developing web applications using Python and a SQL-based DB, have knowledge of engineering principles, religion in unit-testing their code, and an understanding of regular expressions. Expertise in Django and PostgreSQL is preferred. Additional skills in HTML, JavaScript and CSS are also desired. Knowledge of Continuous Deployment Strategies, AWS, Puppet, Redis, Celery, RabbitMQ, and Memcached would be a plus.

Responsibilities

- Analyze, architect, and develop database-driven applications using Python, Django, HTML, Javascript, and PostgreSQL.
- Research, analyze, implement and integrate new mechanisms and technologies to solve technical problems (don't reinvent the wheel).

- Proven experience in developing high availability, high volume web based applications using Python, Django, and PostgreSQL.

Experience

- Experience with HTML, Javascript, and CSS.
- Experience with the APIs from social networks like Facebook and Twitter.
- Experience with database design and optimizations.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Excel at working in a highly collaborative environment.

What We Offer

Change the world potential

First and foremost, we're working on something that truly has the potential to change the world in profound ways. We're ensuring our democracy will be around for our grandkids, and that's a lot more important than building a revolutionary way to sell grilled cheese or running a quick flip on a Groupon clone.

Hard technical challenges

We have huge challenges in machine learning, classification, and scale. Our database already has every voter in the United States plus their voting history -- in some cases going back thirty years. This is a billion rows of data and we've barely even started. We need to figure out how to process this information in way that is meaningful to each and every voter starting in the US (200 million voters) and eventually abroad (Democracy is a growth business.) Moreover, we have a new approach to social networking that uses dynamic linking, meaning: forming and re-forming the interest graph as opinions change, accommodating new nodes and edges in realtime along the way. No one has done this before, and it represents the future of social networks.

Lasting Impact

As our success grows, more and more real people are going to rely on our tools to help form decisions about the future of our country. This means that millions of voters will use the tools our engineers create, and will use them every day. It will be a badge of honor that Votizen engineers work on something so important and fundamental to the lives of everyday citizens.

Top-notch team

Our team is very strong: David Binetti, our CEO, has ten years' industry experience and was the creator of one of the first examples of government e-transparency: USA.gov. Jason Putorti, our designer, was the lead designer for Mint.com and is one of the most highly sought-after designers in the valley. Matt Snider, our engineer, is a front-end guru and has written a book on Javascript (literally). Jeremy Dunck is a Python expert and the Secretary of the Django foundation. David Gouldin is contributing to the Requests library, the successor to httplib2. You get the idea: we want to continue the tradition of only hiring the very best in a given person's field of expertise.

Agile process

We ascribe to agile development processes. We are big believers in test-driven development. We thoroughly document our code. We engage in continuous deployment. We don't have a QA department; when something escapes our test coverage and breaks we fix it immediately. For us, it's all about reducing the iteration cycles. Our processes favor quick identification of problems and fast recovery. Speed is the best prevention.

Great investors

Our lead investor and board member is Sean Parker, who has been at the forefront of several disruptive companies: Napster, Plaxo, Facebook, Causes, Spotify, and Airtime. We have some of the most prescient investors in the business, including Keith Rabois, Mark Goines, Ron Conway, Chris Dixon, and David Cowan. These investors see a huge opportunity in a space ripe for disruption, and our investors are an incredible asset to the company.

Fantastic culture

We have a great culture that rewards risk-taking and creativity. We create features by taking the perspective of the user: "A member should be able to do FOO in order to accomplish BAR as measured by BAZ." After that, implementation is up to the engineer. We are very flexible in our work hours, as long as the job gets done. And we play hard as well -- the office is very competitive, particularly in Starcraft2.

Benefits, Perks

Our benefits and perks are quite light compared to other large companies. We do have full health coverage for families, offer commuter checks, and generally try to be as flexible as possible in responding to team members' needs. But you can forget things like 401Ks, massage therapists and espresso machines. Our goal is to make our equity so valuable that all those things become rounding errors in our personal net worth.

Compensation

We place a premium on equity participation and not salary. Our belief is, "Salary to live on; Equity to retire on." In fact, we have a hard cap on our salary of \$120,000. No one in the company makes more than that.

Process

Following is the hiring process to which we aspire:

Prescreen

Once a resume has been received, our HR Director will arrange a 5-10 minute call to discuss the following questions:

1. Have you done any web development?
2. What is your experience in Python/Django?
3. Are you familiar with startup environments?
4. Are you willing to work out of our Mountain View office daily?
5. What is your interest in politics?

After the discussion a decision will be made based on one of two outcomes:

1. Send resume for [Qualifications Review](#)
2. [No Match](#)

Qualifications Review

We review a candidate's resume/code repositories to assess experience and qualifications. After the review, there should be one of two outcomes:

1. Schedule [Company Vision Presentation](#)
2. [No Match](#)

Company Vision Presentation

The Company Vision Presentation is a 10-15 minute phone conversation interview where David Binetti, our CEO, has the opportunity to present the company vision, answer any candidate questions, and generally assess whether there is a first-order match. This step is more for the benefit of the candidate learn about us, and to determine if it is worth investing time in the [Remote Coding Problem](#).

1. If match and willing, conduct [Remote Coding Problem](#)
2. [No Match](#)

Remote Coding Problem

The coding problem is included in this repository as RemoteCodingProblem.rst, and is a task that shows they know or can learn Django, Python, and Apache. The completed project should be checked into a public Github account, which we can pull down and run locally. The problem should take 3-6 hours, depending on the candidate's understanding of our technology stack and the amount of extras they add.

1. If above bar, schedule [On Site Pair Programming](#)
2. [No Match](#)

On Site Pair Programming

The on site pair programming is an in-person interview, where the candidate will be tasked to code a multi-layered problem on a computer while being paired with one of our engineers. The candidate should be asked to bring a laptop with them (and they can use the language of their choice), or we will provide one. After the on-site, a decision should be immediately made according to one of two outcomes:

1. If good fit, schedule [On Site Team](#)
2. [No Match](#)

On Site Team

The on site team is the final step meant to give all team members an opportunity to assess culture fit. Generally, this will be a half-day of interviews, followed by lunch or dinner. Prior to the team meeting, the focus should be on matching the skills to the role. The team meeting is for matching the personality to the culture of the company. After the on site team interview, all team members should come together to make a determination as follows:

1. If good fit, [Reference Check](#)
2. [Hold](#)
3. [No Match](#)

Reference Check

Reference check should be the final assessment of skills. It is designed really as a veto in case any material information has been misstated or other major issues surface.:

1. If passes, [Extend Offer](#)
2. [No Match](#)

Extend Offer

Once the decision to extend an offer has been made, the hiring manager must put together and present an offer package within one business day. **No exceptions**

Hold

Periodically we might find good candidates that would be a good match aside from timing (on one side or another.) These should be placed in a [Hold](#) status. Ideally, when candidates are placed on hold there should be a defined trigger to bring them out of that state. Examples include: vesting fully, finishing school, campaign ending, etc. It should not be a catch-all category: the supposition should be that all candidates are either hired or declined.

No Match

Most candidates will not be a match. While each case may be handled individually, all candidates who have on-site visits should be informed of no-match via phone. Others may be informed via email. All candidates should be treated respectfully.

Applicant Tracking System

To apply, please use our links from our main job page at <https://www.votizen.com/jobs>.

Special Note for Recruiters

At Votizen we love recruiters! If you haven't already done so, please see our instructions on how to work with us at <http://www.votizen.com/recruiters>.

Questions/Contact Information

If you have any additional information or questions please contact Marty Schneider at marty@votizen.com or 415.690.8683.