

Lift as you climb

Training new evangelists as you grow

Cassidy Williams

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"Lift as you climb"

This phrase is one that a mentor told me when I was first entering the workforce.

^ She told me that those who are great are both mentored and mentor others who are great.

^ That being said, I think that it's not just great people this applies to, but companies and teams as well.



As your brand grows, you will inevitably need to expand your team and community to the next level.

^ But, as you know, there's only so many evangelists on the market in this ever-growing field.

If you can't find them
Make them yourself

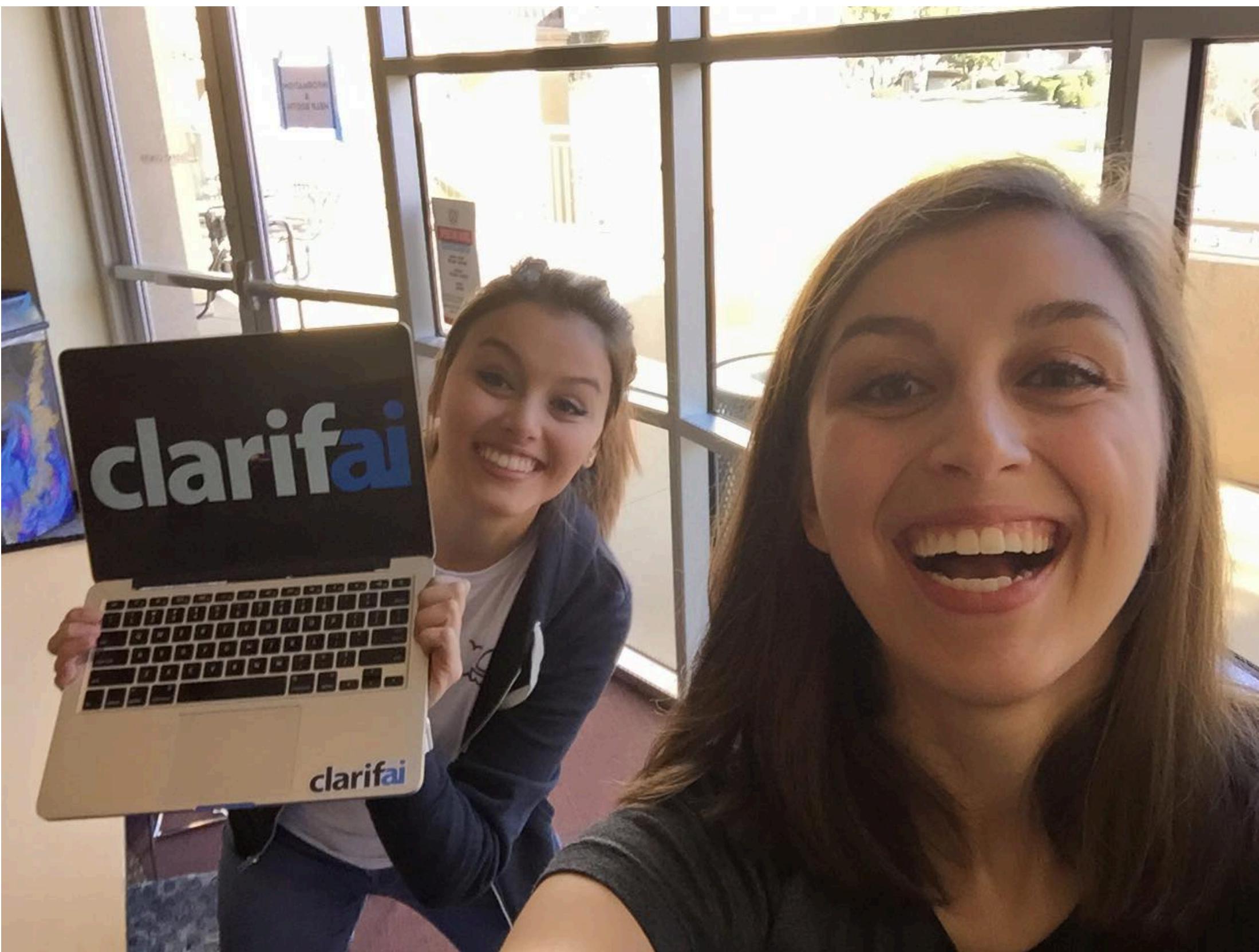
So, what do you do when you can't find evangelists to hire? You create hireable evangelists.
^ You make your users your evangelists.







Flashback to 2015, I joined small startup Clarifai as their 17th employee.



My sister and I were the only two evangelists in the company, and we had to show their awesome technology to the world, somehow.

^ We did the standard "go to hackathons and conferences and meetups all the time" thing, but that was not only tiring, but limited because of our small team.



Thus, the Clarifai Champions were born!



Quick flashback, back when I was in school, Twilio started a 6-month evangelism training program.

^ There were 12 of us in the program, and it started strong and sort of tapered off at the end because of schedules of both the participants and the evangelists.



Cassidy Williams

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I'm thinking about making a program similar to Twilio Heroes at my current job. I really loved this program and I'd like to pay it forward! Would that be okay?

Like

Comment



Joe Nash, Nicolas Vid Grenié and 2 others

Seen by 12



Rob Spectre Of course - go get 'em!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · October 29, 2015 at 10:51am

After asking politely if we could rip off Twilio's idea...



The Clarifai Champions were born!

The Champs program (overview)

- 3 months long
- 4 separate segments focusing on:
 - Public speaking
 - Technical Writing
 - Events + Mentorship
 - Technical Demos + Projects

Our program was a little different from the Twilio program. It was shorter, we used Slack for communication, and we talked with the Champs every day.

The Champs program (specifics)

- 1 video lecture every 3 weeks
- Office hours every week
- "Homework" assignments for every segment
- Detailed feedback for each assignment turned in
- Ongoing Slack discussions throughout the program
- First cohort had 27 Champs, next cohort had 45
- Top Champs got flown to our NYC office

Things that were easy and fun

- The lectures
- The office hours
- The Slack chatter

Things that were a challenge

- Grading assignments for everyone
- Going through applicants
- The Slack chatter

Benefits for the company

- Monthly active users jumped up
- API usage hit new areas of the world
- Champs' blog posts and API projects could be promoted by marketing
- Company reputation in the hackathon community felt more established

Benefits for the Champs

- Tight-knit community of dev evangelists
- Practical experience for necessary skills
- Connections to people in the industry
 - Including job recommendations
- Swag (of course)

You can do this, too!

You can do this, too!

The next generation of evangelists are out there,
they just don't know it yet!

Computer science graduates, hackathon goers, open source contributors, bootcamp grads, they all have the passion for coding. They often also have the passion for the community, too.

Your job is to train them how to **communicate**

Through projects for your company, they can exercise their speaking, writing, mentoring, and social skills.

^ It's a self-selecting group. Their passion is there, you just have to help guide it.

Any questions?

Thanks!

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