THE PITCH^X

2022 INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT FOR INDIANA TECH JOBS - CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION

Background:
The tech workforce has grown by 16.3 percent over the past decade, a 60 percent faster rate than seen across other industries. More than 184,000 Hoosiers now work in tech and tech-enabled roles, filling one of every 10 jobs in Indiana. However, we do not have enough people ready to fill the current openings in tech and tech-related jobs in Indiana, much less to fill future roles as the exponential growth in the industry continues. Finding and retaining talent is job #1 for the Indiana tech workforce.

To succeed, we must correct generational imbalances and inequity by creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce by changing mindsets and cultures. We must overcome obstacles along the talent pathway from our youths' earliest exposure to training and education, to hiring and onboarding, and to supporting and advancing mid-career professions. And, we must modernize talent pathways and provide new talent on-ramps for candidates from underrepresented groups.

The long-anticipated 'Baby Echo' cohort has begun enrolling in higher education. This demographic group is the result of a decline in births due to the Great Recession of 2008, and it is projected to drop traditional college-age enrollments by 15 percent across Midwest colleges and universities for the coming decade. The pool of traditionally prepared, college-degreed talent that companies have relied upon is about to shrink considerably, precisely at the time of greatest demand. Together, COVID, the Great Resignation, and the College Enrollment Cliff are creating a perfect storm of talent demand and supply challenges for the IT workforce.

The tech industry nationwide has long grappled with an overwhelming lack of diversity among employees, executives, venture-backed founders, venture capital firms and board members. Despite recent efforts to increase diversity throughout the industry, tech still remains predominantly white and male. Participation rates in the tech workforce make this starkly clear:

- LatinX workers represent only 3 percent of the overall Indiana workforce while constituting 7 percent of the Indiana population.

- Black workers comprise just 7 percent of the Indiana tech workforce, while making up 9 percent of the Indiana workforce

- Women currently comprise just 28 percent of the tech workforce in Indiana, while women make up 48 percent of the overall Indiana workforce.

Finding and retaining diverse talent is job #1 for the Indiana tech workforce, but the traditional education path is working for only a small percentage of Indiana students and employers. Indiana must resolve its issues of access, opportunity and equity if it is to develop the tech workforce that companies must have in the coming years. Instead of focusing on the skills gap, it's time to focus on closing the opportunity gap. Not only for the benefit of individuals who have been shut out of the labor market, but for society as a whole by investing in diverse talent can unleash economic growth and community well-being.

According to the Brookings Institute, many low-wage workers—particularly Black, Latino or Hispanic, and Indigenous workers—are trapped in multigenerational lower-caste jobs without access to career exposure, premium education, or professional networks. We must focus on educational investments that offer all residents expansive career options and multiple routes to new careers. We can't continue to offer programs that assume that low-income individuals are only capable of low-income work.

Challenge:

What is the most effective way to share tech workforce information and engage historically under-represented and excluded individuals? How do we find and engage minority adults who have not had a traditional education or introduction to tech roles being a viable pathway for employment?

 Consider just six specific jobs, three that are technical and three that do not require coding skills: junior developer, software developer, IT Support, product manager, product owner, and business analyst.

How can we engage with people who are not looking for these roles? How can we teach them about these roles, their potential fit, explain the foundational skills, help them understand the technology skills, and especially give examples and options for training/education/apprenticeship pathways and career progression?

Subject Matter Experts:
1. **LaJoi Shelton Robinson**
2. **Jeff Ton**

Research Resources:

- [Article](): Indiana must do more to put more Hoosiers of color and women onto and successfully through its tech education pathways
- [Article](): Indiana's collision course with a 'perfect storm' shortage of tech talent
- [Report](): Charting the next chapter for TechPoint and Indiana's tech ecosystem
- [Article](): The new holy grail for tech hubs: Talent
- [Article](): THE LOOMING HIGHER ED ENROLLMENT CLIFF
- [Report](): K-12 Computer Science Education in Indiana
- [Article](): How To Build A Strong Tech Talent Pipeline
- [Indiana Department of Education K-12 Computer Science Report for 2021]()
- Career Resources from Indiana that include funding, grants, info, etcl
  - [Indiana Career Ready]()
  - [Work One]()
  - [Skill Up]()
  - [IN Gov Career Connections & Talents]()
  - [Indiana Office of Work Based Learning]()

Customer Persona Example #1 - Unskilled Laborer

- Pains
  - Feeling unsupported & undervalued
  - Inconsistent work situations have led to a scarcity mindset
  - Limited financial resources to think about major life changes
  - Supportive services such as child care and transportation
  - No one in their family works in tech or maybe attended college
  - Lack of understanding of resources and a way into these roles; believe a college degree is required

- ○ May believe that automation/tech is a bad thing based on previous generations and current jobs

- Gains
  - ○ Feel more respected and valued
  - ○ Stability in work situation and/or easily and comfortably able to switch between different teaching situations
  - ○ Able to make best use of all resources available
  - ○ Could be eligible for grants, apprenticeships, and other support that would make it possible to work, earn a paycheck and have benefits while learning on the job
  - ○ May have the foundational skills needed to start on the job training for a few of these roles
  - ○ Some have the aptitude to learn more technical skills but didn't have anyone or any programming to reinforce that jobs in technology was an option

Customer Persona Example #2 - Female Minority K-12 Student

- Pains
  - ○ Struggling with barriers to success
  - ○ Exhausted by inconsistent learning (in-person vs remote)
  - ○ Behind in a variety of subjects, as are most students this year
  - ○ Possibly lacking support system at home and access to summer learning programming
  - ○ Facing inadequate access to school resources, including but not limited to AP courses, diverse foreign language offerings, the arts, school counseling, and further education mentoring
  - ○ Have never been the target demographic for various computer science or technology courses nor do they see anyone in those courses that necessarily look like them
  - ○ May have always believed that community college or a four year college experience was not possible for them

- Gains
  - ○ Learning about possible pathways and support systems may open the idea of new coursework and even certifications before graduation
  - ○ Able to leverage tools while still in school to improve chances for and access to further education

- ○ Able to leverage tools to improve access to and knowledge of workforce opportunities
- ○ Able to access equitable opportunities alongside all students
- ○ Self-preparedness, as well as buy in from family, for affordable education and/or on-the-job learning

Customer Persona Example #3 - Female Minority College Student

- ● Pains
  - ○ Struggling with barriers to success in terms of resources and support in career exploration, internships, and understanding opportunities
  - ○ Possibly lacking support system at home and access to summer learning programming
  - ○ Have never been the target demographic for various computer science or technology courses nor do they see anyone in those courses that necessarily look like them
  - ○ May have always believed that a role in tech involved coding, programming or required more math or science than was taken in high school

- ● Gains
  - ○ Learning about possible pathways and support systems may open the idea of new coursework and even certifications before graduation
  - ○ Able to leverage tools while still in school to improve chances for and access to further education
  - ○ Able to leverage tools to improve access to and knowledge of workforce opportunities
  - ○ Able to access equitable opportunities alongside all students
  - ○ Self-preparedness, as well as buy in from family, for affordable education and/or on-the-job learning