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The Best Path To A Career In Software Development

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“Don’t I need a Computer Science degree to get a job as a software developer?” As a non-traditional educational model, we hear this concern a lot. Prospective students often compare us to four year degrees in CS with the concern that lacking a piece of paper and formal degree will prevent them from getting a job. We’re here to tell you once and for all: college is NOT the best way to become a software developer.

For the avoidance of doubt, there is a lot of merit to a four year degree, as well as a lot of valuable knowledge from a CS program that can apply to life as a developer. However, if your goal is to get a job as a software developer, there’s a more direct path.

Think of it this way:my plumbing is old and broken, and I need to replace it all. I hire a PhD in Fluid Dynamics – someone who really understands flow, gravity, resistance, momentum, and all the intricacies of what’s happening in my pipes. They come and explain how everything is supposed to work in my new pipes, charge me $5,000 for their time, and then leave. With my pipes still broken, I decided to hire a plumber – someone who knows how to identify the problem and fix it,and a week later my plumbing is fully functional and I’ve only spent $2,500. [Note, we kind of made these numbers up to illustrate a point. After all, we’re no *drain* surgeons.]

The message here is simple: theory is not the same thing as practical experience. With the rapid growth in web and IT, we’re no longer just dealing with cutting-edge technologies. Development is becoming the new blue-collar factory work, and the amount of code out there is astounding. It’s no longer as important to have high-level abstract education. Instead, the top priority is up-to-date practical experience.

Now, let’s get more specific. Why exactly is a coding bootcamp the better way to get a job as a software developer?

#1 Technologies: Techno gular, and the next it’s React. In one generation ava. Because of this rate of change, it’s hard for tra ch C++, we’ve moved on

to Java with a Spring framework and MySQL database. Because we're more agile, we are able to keep pace with industry trends.

#2 Curriculum structure: Have you ever watched Top Chef or The Great British Bake Off? You were probably pretty entertained, but how did that seared Ahi Tuna with orange mint avocado salsa and balsamic vinegar reduce amuse-bouche turn out? The sad reality is, watching experts do their thing doesn't make you an expert. Nor does listening to lectures. Our program is built around the concept of praxis, which is essentially the practical application of theory, or the blending of theory and practice. Half of your 670 program hours are spent actually writing code, so you develop the muscle memory and experience of programming. This career is like an old-time trade, like becoming a blacksmith: you have to learn from masters and practice, practice, practice.

#3 Job placement services: If education is your goal, stop reading now. If a career is your goal, then you're in the right place. Most undergraduate institutions have career service offices where you can get advice on your resume and attend job fairs. But Codeup makes you a promise: get a job after graduation or get 100% of your money back. There are no two ways about that: our singular focus is your outcome. Unlike traditional institutions, we sell jobs, not education.

#4 Programming hours: This is similar to number 2, but so important that it's worth repeating. The single most important thing a would-be developer can do is spend time writing code. Practice, practice, practice is the lesson above all else. You need to engage with the problem-solving cycle, learn how to fail, and learn to overcome the barriers inherent in programming. It's a lot like learning an instrument. When you start out, you struggle to play single notes. You then practice scales and exercises, and before long you're playing songs, thinking about the intonation and sound over playing the notes. With programming, you need to spend hours to get the basics under your fingers in order to graduate to complex problem-solving and application development. At Codeup, you spend 670 hours in hands-on, instructor-led classroom time. For those of you who like math, that's roughly equivalent to the number of hours in a four-year degree. It just happens in 5 months, and those hours are hands-on.

If you're still not convinced, consider the story of Po. Po graduated from Trinity University with a 4 year degree in Computer Science. He graduated with a good GPA, but couldn't find work as a web developer for a whole year. Companies told him he didn't have enough full-stack experience, a big enough portfolio, and was lacking modern technologies and languages. So, he came to Codeup. He paired his theory knowledge with our practical knowledge and landed a job immediately upon graduation. Since then, he's moved to Dallas to join Cognizant, where he's been able to double his salary and move into a new position as a lead developer. Learn more about Po's journey here.

So, you want to be a software developer? A career accelerator like Codeup is the path for you. Still not convinced? Contact us and we'll talk it out.