JamLabs Recruitment Brief

May 22, 2024

JamLabs Data Science is a leading provider of comprehensive data analytics solutions. Our mission is to empower businesses to maximize the value of their data through data science, advanced analytics, cloud engineering, and tailored product advisory services. We specialize in transforming complex data infrastructures and developing data-driven applications that clients can monetize or improve business efficiency.

1. Need Overview

- **Quantity:** Two senior/lead full-stack engineers, one with slightly more GUI experience.
- **Start date:** ASAP, but willing to wait for the ideal candidate. We have a project starting imminently.
- **Pivot to Gen AI:** Candidates with experience in Gen AI are a major plus. We seek well-rounded talent with a proven track record who can passionately jump into different problems.

2. Ideal Candidate Profile:

- Experience: Minimum of 10+ years in software development, with a preference for candidates who have served in a lead engineer capacity.

- Background: Candidates who have worked at large tech companies or dynamic tech startups. Experience in fintech is a plus but not required.

- Skills: Strong proficiency in software development, system architecture, DevOps, and cloud infrastructures. Skilled in programming languages like JavaScript and Python and frameworks like React and Node.js.

- **We are increasingly moving towards Generative AI work.** While it is still in the early stages for us, experience with technologies such as LangChain, LangSmith, Transformers, GPT, RAG (Retrieval Augmented Generation), Large Language Models (LLMs), Vector Databases (e.g., Pinecone, Weaviate), Knowledge Graphs, BERT, Neural Networks, Reinforcement Learning, and AWS Bedrock are highly desirable.

- Target Salary: $160K-$180K, would move higher if a perfect fit

- Contracting? **No**

3. Sourcing Preferences:

- We are looking for candidates who currently or have previously worked at top tech firms and startups.

- We do not want people who have spent most of their careers in firms with less innovation. While there are stars in banks, our experience finds the talent to be typically incompatible with JamLabs' fast-paced style.

- Finance and capital markets experience is a bonus but mostly irrelevant regarding long-term value to JamLabs and employee success.

4. Screening Questions:

- Can you describe a complex project you led as a lead engineer?

- What technologies did you use in your last role, and how did you apply them to solve business problems? Why did you choose those technologies?

- Did you coordinate with business stakeholders or customers directly?

- How do you stay updated with technology trends, especially in cloud services and DevOps practices?

5. Screening Focus Areas:

- Technical Skills: Evaluate proficiency with technical assessments and problem-solving scenarios relevant to your tech stack.

- Leadership Experience: Discuss past experiences leading teams, managing projects, and contributing to strategic decisions.

- Cultural Fit: Assess alignment with your company's values and vision through behavioural interview techniques.

6. Candidate FAQ:

What are the core responsibilities of the role?

- Engage in full-stack development, encompassing everything from back-end to front-end, including cloud infrastructure and DevOps.
- Mentor junior team members, design architectures, and develop algorithms to solve complex, data-driven problems.

What kinds of projects?

JamLabs projects mostly consult in the capital markets space on tough problems. We have clients in London (UK) and New York. Travel is a distinct possibility. Outside of consulting, we are internally working on a Gen AI product that we will increasingly invest in over time. We have a deprecated product for data e-commerce.

- One project is an anomaly detection data quality system used by a large global team of operators for a major financial services company. The system is real-time and involves large amounts of data that push some limits on our cloud provider.
- Another project in analyzing the cost of trades for institutional clients. Users send trades, and the system provides an analysis against a suite of benchmarks so that traders can make better trading decisions and understand their performance.

What is the typical career path for someone in this position?

Career progression is diverse, including client-facing roles, product ownership, and pathways for individual solid contributors who wish to focus on system design and impactful projects. Employees have progressed from co-op positions to managing multi-million dollar projects.

Is there a bonus?

Yes, employees are eligible for an approximately 10% performance-based bonus. Provide feedback if this isn't sufficient.

Are specific certifications or technical skills required or preferred?

While optional, certifications in AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud are highly regarded but not a substitute for hands-on experience.

What is the company culture like?

We are committed to creating and upholding best practices and continuously optimizing systems. The work environment is relaxed, friendly, and supportive, emphasizing maintaining work-life balance. Our office is located in the vibrant area of 160 John Street, Toronto.

What are the team dynamics?

The team is highly collaborative, offering flexibility for remote work and focused work with headphones when needed. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for office politics, prioritizing support and resources for team growth and success.

What are the most challenging aspects of this job?

The role requires navigating fast-paced dynamics and changing customer requirements, often with limited initial information. It demands a strong ability to learn quickly and adapt in a technologically intensive environment.

Is remote work an option, and what is the policy?

We support a hybrid work model, requiring a presence in the office 2-3 days a week, with flexibility based on project needs. We seek candidates who can commute to our Toronto office and are enthusiastic about contributing to a thriving office culture.

What are the performance evaluation criteria for this role?

Performance evaluations are based on meeting personal career growth goals, productivity, impact, and customer satisfaction.

Who will the new hire report to, and what is their management style?

The new hire will report to the CTO, Andre Di Genova, who adopts a hands-off approach, focusing on empowering staff and providing mentoring as needed.

What are the company's strategic goals, and how does this position contribute?

Our strategic goal is to transition into a product-oriented company within the B2B enterprise space, addressing unique, underserved, data-driven problems. Our consulting services are a step towards understanding these challenges.

What is the interview process like?

The interview process includes 2-3 rounds, starting with a culture fit and essential technical screening, followed by 1-2 deeper technical discussions. Candidates will have the opportunity to meet the entire team, and a final discussion will focus on compensation details.

Are there opportunities for professional development and training?

Yes, we actively encourage and financially support our staff's professional development and certification efforts.

7. Examples of previous companies that we like to see

At JamLabs Data Science, we seek candidates who have previously worked at innovative and dynamic companies. The ideal companies fall into the following archetypes:

Archetype 1: Large Tech Companies

These companies are known for their cutting-edge technology, innovation, and significant contributions to the tech industry. Experience at these firms typically indicates exposure to advanced technologies, large-scale projects, and high-performance standards.

- Google
- Microsoft
- Amazon
- Apple
- Facebook/Meta

Archetype 2: Dynamic Tech Startups

These companies are characterized by rapid growth, innovation, and agility. Experience at these firms suggests a candidate is adaptable, entrepreneurial, and capable of thriving in fast-paced environments.

- Stripe
- Snowflake
- Databricks
- Twilio
- Zoom

Archetype 3: Gen AI Focused Companies

These companies specialize in AI and machine learning, particularly generative AI. Experience here indicates a deep understanding of advanced AI technologies and applications.

- OpenAI
- Hugging Face
- DeepMind
- Anthropic
- Cohere

Archetype 4: Toronto Startups and Companies

These local companies are known for their innovation and contribution to the tech scene in Toronto. Experience at these firms indicates familiarity with the local tech ecosystem and involvement in cutting-edge projects.

- Wealthsimple
- Shopify
- Ritual
- Ecobee
- Ada

8. Keywords:

- Gen AI:
  - GenAI
  - LLM
  - NLP
  - LangChain
  - GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer)
  - Transformers
  - BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers)
  - RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation)
  - Pinecone
  - Weaviate
  - Milvus
  - Qdrant
  - Faiss
  - Annoy
  - Elasticsearch with k-NN plugin

- - Zilliz
    - Vespa
    - ScaNN
  - Strong Technical:
    - Python
    - JavaScript
    - React
    - Spark
    - AWS, AWS Certified
    - GCP Certified
    - Azure Certified
    - Cloud infrastructure
  - Strong Role:
    - Full-stack
    - Lead engineer
    - Software Architect
    - Tech lead
    - Hybrid work
    - Toronto-based
  - Strong Attributes:
    - Collaborative
    - Quick learner
    - Innovative thinker
    - Customer-focused
    - Strong communication
  - Negative technology (don't exclude candidates, but not good if heavy in experience in these areas):
    - jQuery
    - WordPress
    - PHP
    - Drupal
    - On-prem
    - .NET
    - Outdated certifications
    - Legacy technology, in general
  - Negative Role:

- Freelancer
- Contractor
- Remote-only
- Self-employed
- Part-time
- Job hopper (short tenures at multiple companies)
- Solo work preference (if the position requires high collaboration)