

Dan Newns – Founder of Jump24 Web Dev Agency

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Jump24 is a web development agency that specialise in PHP and Vue.js, React and vanilla HTML. Dan founded the company 8 years ago based on his experience of previously working at other agencies, trying to take the best (and avoid the worst) of all of them.

He is very keen on test-driven development and that is a priority for the business. If someone brings a project to them that's in bad shape, they might spend the first month or 2 writing tests to try and improve the code.

His experience is often that salespeople/management underestimate how long it takes to develop a product and this results in the dev team having to work crazy hours to deliver, which is not sustainable.

When a new client comes, the whole team will make a decision on whether to take on the project or not (from top right down to junior devs) and agree timescales etc.

As a junior dev, don't be afraid to speak up as you may be more up to date on what's the latest upcoming technology – Dan remembers working at a leading company in Flash and seeing HTML5 coming up and urging them to switch but they didn't so then dropped to a mediocre company in HTML until they made a massive effort to catch up.

Selected Q & As

What are you looking for from a Junior Dev's portfolio? He doesn't really look at portfolios – it's more about getting to know you, so research in to the company, show passion

What questions could we ask at interview to check the ethos (e.g. not wanting to work 60 hours a week)? Ask questions like "Do you pay overtime?" – they may say "No, because we don't do it!". Could find people who already work there on LinkedIn, particularly if they've been there for a while, and reach out to them to find out what it's like to work there (as interviewer will make it look rosy!).

What's the next big thing you can see happening in web development? HTML and CSS! Which sounds strange but it's done a full circle now and performance is critical in websites – he's seeing a lot more requests for static websites (server-side rendering) in his business. There is a lot more you can do from vanilla HTML now, without even needing JavaScript.

With the rising popularity of 4 day working week (and success shown in studies), would this be something you would adopt in your company? Are you constantly reviewing productivity in your current workflow? Dan really wants to get to 80-20 split, so 4 days a week they work on client projects, and the 5th day is a day for upskilling or working together as team on something different (e.g. they've built a couple of start-ups for one of the co-founders that have gone on to sell).