



FullConTech 2016

Action Starts Here

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FullConTech 2016 – an overview

Michael Schutzler, WTIA CEO, calls FullConTech “an experiment in collaboration,” because the event brings together leaders from the tech industry, education, government and non-profit to discuss issues, solve problems, and create new ways to foster growth in our tech community. The goal is to provide FullConTech participants with the opportunity to have conversations they wouldn’t have anywhere else – with a diverse group of people, exchanging new ideas, and focused on taking action.

This year’s FullConTech took place at the Microsoft Conference Center in Redmond and focused on growing, attracting and retaining talent, within both individual organizations and our region. We covered this topic through three types of sessions:

- ▶ **Flash Talks** – 3 speakers each took 15 minutes to share their individual stories related to talent.
- ▶ **Discover Sessions** – Participants engaged with a panel of speakers on a specific topic, sharing ideas and uncovering new ways of thinking about growing, attracting and retaining talent.
- ▶ **Invent Sessions** – Participants worked together in cross-sector groups to develop “plays” designed to address a talent challenge of their choosing.

The event kicked off with a review of the plays from FullConTech 2015 WTIA committed to starting.

- ▶ **Host a level-playing-field career fair.** WTIA piloted Training Camp and Draft Day, a program aimed to help top candidates from small college, community colleges, and code schools get access to entry level jobs in the tech industry. In June 2016, WTIA gave interview prep to 86 nominated candidates from 14 different schools. After two more rounds of vetting, the top 16 candidates were interviewed by 7 tech employers. Their schools were removed from their resumes to reduce bias. Of the 16 candidates, 5 accepted job offers.
- ▶ **Develop a standard taxonomy of tech jobs.** The WTIA Workforce Institute Apprenticeship Committee (WIAC) is comprised of tech industry leaders who oversee Apprenti, the WTIA Workforce Institute registered tech apprenticeship program. The WIAC developed and approved standard work processes and competencies required for an entry-level person in the following occupations: software application developer, web application developer, network security administrator, database administrator and project manager. WTIA has reviewed 50 job descriptions for entry level software developers and is in the process of identifying common requirements and forming a committee of educators committed to revising their course descriptions to reflect industry’s requirements.
- ▶ **Branding the Puget Sound as a great place to work, live, and start a business.** WTIA partnered with Madrona Venture Group to update the Seattle Tech Universe map, showcasing the vibrancy of tech companies in the Puget Sound. WTIA has also been supporting Challenge Seattle’s multi-industry efforts to brand the region.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee then took the stage with Jackson Patterson, a student with TAF Academy, to talk about the state’s efforts to help foster job opportunities and develop talent required to fuel economic growth. Gov. Inslee emphasized the need to start teaching coding skills early in a child’s education and creating paths for everyone to reach their potential, saying, “Poverty cannot be destiny,” one of the day’s most tweeted comments.

Flash Talks presented personal stories

New to FullConTech this year was the Flash Talk session, during which three diverse, courageous speakers each shared their personal perspectives on growing, attracting and retaining talent. Our goal for these talks was to help participants think differently about the topic of “talent” and get the FullConTech conversations started, even before participants walked into their first Discover Session. Based on the Twitter posts, participants found the talks refreshing, informative, thought-provoking and sometimes uncomfortable.

Our three Flash Talks were:

TRACK	SPEAKER	ORGANIZATION	TOPIC
Grow	Daniel Browning	Recent hire via Draft Day, BoldIQ	The challenges of getting hired as a veteran and what my experience and perspective offers employers
Attract	Mark Budos	Vice President of Community and Data Engineering, Comcast NBC Universal	The truth about white male privilege: How I know I have it and what I’m doing to bring more diversity to my team
Retain	Anna Steffeney	Founder and CEO, LeaveLogic	Paid family leave: more than policy

Here are some of the comments participants posted on Twitter in reaction to the Flash Talks:

- “ Disabled veteran & Draft Day success story, Daniel Browning of BoldIQ, speaks at #FullConTech about overcoming stereotypes. So inspiring!”
- “ Daniel Browning tells his story of transitioning from soldier to tech professional at #FullConTech. It's not as easy as we might think.”
- “ Come on tech companies - we need to hire more people like Daniel Browning, humble confident military vet who got a CS degree #fullcontech”
- “ Intrigued to hear white guy from Comcast speak about white male privilege. #FullConTech”
- “ Talking about diversity is uncomfortable...this is not about quotas, this is not about looking good" -Mark Budos of @Comcast #fullcontech”
- “ Mark Budos' candor, esp his discomfort when he first talked about #diversity. We need more like him! #FullConTech @comcast”
- “ I'm thrilled to see @AnnaSteffeney of @LeaveLogic speaking at #fullcontechtoday! One of my favorite #Seattle #startup founders”
- “ Flash talks at the #fullcontech Anna Steffeney CEO at LeaveLogic. Great speakers and great insights.”
- “ Wow.. #USA and 2 other places in the world don't have mandatory #paidleave in the #workforce #FullConTech”

The Big Themes in our conversations

A number of Big Themes emerged during the Discovery Sessions panel discussions and were repeated throughout the afternoon in the Invent Sessions, as participants worked to develop new problem-solving plays:

1. **Our region needs to build a more robust entrepreneur community** for mentoring and coaching, exchanging connections to capital, recruiting new entrepreneurs to the area, networking, and best practice sharing.
2. **We need to market our region to entrepreneurs of all types**, showcasing the area's natural beauty, broad range of cultural and outdoor activities, and large companies headquartered here as a draw for entrepreneurs and companies of all sizes.
3. **Computer Science should be part of the K-12 core curriculum**, like Math and English. As part of this, there needs greater support from all companies for programs like TEALS, Code.org, and FIRST, as well as providing teachers with professional development. Moreover, we need more connection between industry and government, more working together on common priorities, to get legislative dollars to the right places.
4. **In developing tech talent, we need to expand our focus beyond traditional students** to older employees who want to switch careers, mothers looking to reenter the workforce, and veterans. We also need to think beyond technical skills and hire for and develop soft skills, like leadership, teamwork, critical thinking and communication.
5. **Retaining talent often comes down to providing employees with a compelling mission**, making them feel that they matter and are contribution, and giving them opportunities to learn and grow.
6. **We need to encourage more risk-taking**, from thinking differently about the people we hire to how we conduct our recruiting processes to supporting more people to become entrepreneurs to increasing our investment in startups.
7. **We need to figure out how to do high volume hiring**, especially with millennials, who, on average, like to change jobs often. This could also mean rethinking the purpose of training, which may be both enhancing skills for the current job and providing skills for wherever an employee goes next, to ensure they leave feeling they had a good experience.

“HAVING YOUR EMPLOYEES COMMIT TO EXPANDING THEIR KNOWLEDGE IS A KEY STEP IN PREPARING EMPLOYEES FOR DIFFERENT AND MORE CHALLENGING JOBS.”

Diversity is good for business and for the tech community

Throughout every discussion the most significant theme was that of diversity – in hiring, developing, engaging and promoting employees, in supporting entrepreneurs, and in attracting new companies to our region. Participants seemed to agree that diversity is good for business, and they pushed aside the traditional excuse that diverse talent is in short supply in favor of a new theory: We need to stop searching for talent in the same places. Creating more diversity in the tech community, participants argued, requires change: recruiting at different schools, building new partnerships, confronting our own individual biases, experimenting with new approaches, and questioning conventional wisdom, like “hiring for fit” and “extroverts make the best leaders.” There was also a repeated call for removing personal information (e.g., name and schools) from job candidate resumes to help level the playing field.

“‘UNCOMFORTABLE’ DOESN’T EQUAL ‘WRONG.’”

Discomfort came up repeatedly in the conversations as a fundamental part of this change process, and in our efforts to bring more diversity to our organizations and our industry, participants said, we have to embrace the idea that “uncomfortable” doesn’t equal “wrong.” Jesse Woolley Wilson talked about this discomfort as “benevolent friction,” and a number of participants expressed the view, “If everyone on the team always agrees, you don’t have a great team.”

There was a general belief that “the tone is set at the top,” and leaders need to be able to articulate clearly the value of diversity in their organizations and demonstrate what “being inclusive” looks like. Leaders and managers also should get to know employees as individuals, understand their unique strengths and perspectives, and proactively help women and people of color, who are underrepresented in the technology industry, feel more connected within their organizations. “Listen to every voice,” participants said, as they emphasized the importance of asking questions and engaging in open conversations.

Hurdles we need to clear to move forward

FullConTech 2016 participants also identified a number of regional factors that impact the tech community's ability grow, attract and retain talent:

- ▶ **Non-compete clauses in employment contracts**, which restrict the movement of experienced, specialized and leadership talent
- ▶ **Transportation issues (e.g., limited light rail and congestion)** that make the area unattractive to many potential employees, especially millennials who eschew owning cars
- ▶ **Shortage of local startup capital** and the low percentage of successful startup founders who invest in other startups (v. San Francisco)
- ▶ **Lack of strong branding for the region and the state**, making it more difficult to attract entrepreneurs and companies (NOTE: This was a problem that was highlighted throughout the day, as it was at last year's event, and will require a broad effort at the state level – beyond the WTIA's aegis but with its support – to solve.)

These were not problems we addressed in our Invent Sessions but were recurring themes throughout the day and issues about which participants expressed particularly concern.

What is the Playbook?

This Playbook brings together the plays developed in the FullConTech Invent Sessions and lays them out into two sections: one focused on actions the tech community can take to grow and attract talent in our region; and the other covering actions companies can take to grow and retain talent within their own organizations.

This year, we took a new approach to setting the topics for the afternoon Invent Sessions, creating a list of specific, relevant problems to be solved and asking participants when they registered for FullConTech which one they would like to tackle. Based on those preferences, we narrowed our list of problems to seven:

1. How can we expand existing efforts to develop more potential talent?
2. What can we do to better align community college and other non-4-year programs with hiring needs so that we expand our talent pool?
3. What new public-private collaborations could we create to help grow regional talent? And/or are there existing collaborations we could expand?
4. How do we attract tech companies to foster innovative start-ups in the region?
5. Are there resources individual companies can partner with to bring outside talent development programs into their businesses?
6. How can we more effectively onboard junior hires and quickly make them productive?
7. How do we retain talent and with an emphasis on diversity?

Each Invent Session group took on one of these problems, developed its own approach to building solutions,

and produced one or more plays. Although every group had cross-sector representation and participants felt a strong connection to their topic, the discussions turned out to be very different – in style, structure, and focus; and so the plays they produced have varied elements and personalities. This reflects an important element of the Invent Sessions: Working together, participants have the freedom to create solutions in a way that works best for their group.

The ideas produced form an abundance of riches, ideas that organizations can use to improve the way they grow, attract and retain talent. All of us at the WTIA look forward to learning which ideas get used, how they're implemented, and what outcomes they produce. Please contact us at fullcontech@washingtontechnology.org and tell us your story. We'd like to know how you used this Playbook, so that we can learn from you and share your experiments and results with other FullConTech participants and WTIA members.

WTIA has identified plays from Section 1 of "The Plays" that it will use to shape its activities over the coming year:

- ▶ Expand current WTIA efforts and do more to encourage volunteering, share best practices and raise awareness among members (to enhance existing efforts to develop potential talent in the region)
- ▶ Expand the WTIA Draft Day program -- Create opportunities for mock interviews; develop soft skills; engage alumni to help promote at their companies
- ▶ Create opportunities for and encourage members to volunteer with talent development programs
- ▶ Collect and share best practices – How are member companies interacting with external talent development programs, such as Ada and Code.org?
- ▶ Create more awareness among WTIA members of existing talent development programs around the state and how they can get involved.
- ▶ Strengthen the entrepreneur ecosystem (to help attract talent to our region) -- Organize activities to build community among entrepreneurs and VCs

In addition, WTIA will create opportunities for its members and FullConTech attendees to join together and take action on the plays in Section 1. WTIA also will provide updates on activities based on or inspired by FullConTech plays.

Certainly, FullConTech is about action and problem-solving, but just as important is the opportunity the event creates for people to come together as a community – government, education, non-profit and industry – and talk about issues that matter. In fact, this year's FullConTech participation represents a truly diverse set of perspectives:

- ▶ Government sector attendance -- 11% (7% in 2015)
- ▶ Education sector attendance -- 25% (15% in 2015)
- ▶ 24 speakers, including 14 women and 8 people of color

This is a rare collection of people to gather under one roof, and for many participants, FullConTech gave them a chance to sit across a table from, collaborate with, and bring into their network someone they wouldn't have met otherwise. FullConTech 2016 took place during a time when great divides and harsh debate were dominating the larger landscape. But within the Microsoft Conference Center, a sense of community and a desire to work together prevailed throughout the day. For this reason alone, the 2016 Playbook is a powerful artifact.

THE PLAYS: SECTION ONE

PLAYS THE TECHNOLOGY COMMUNITY CAN TAKE ON TO GROW AND ATTRACT TALENT IN OUR REGION

TRACK: GROW TALENT IN OUR REGION

1. Problem to solve: How can we expand existing efforts to develop more potential talent?

Facilitator

▶ Dave Forrester, Director of Services and Consulting at 501 Commons

Expert

▶ Charles Keating, President at West Sound Technology Association

“YOUR TALENT IS
IN YOUR OWN
BACKYARD.”

—Jody Laflen, Bellevue College

The group focused its discussion on programs across the state, as it felt the pipeline gap was bigger in areas outside Puget Sound. Two concerns that emerged in this discussion were

1. increasing diverse representation in the pipeline; and
2. getting more participation from large tech companies (e.g., Microsoft and Amazon) in WTIA-sponsored discussions on this topic.

The programs in which the group was most interested fell into the following categories:

- ▶ K-12 Education
- ▶ Community Education (Kids)
- ▶ Community Education (Career Changers, Apprenticeship Programs, Interns)
- ▶ Higher Ed
- ▶ Industry Placement/Recruiters (Draft Day placement Services)

1.1 Play: Expand current WTIA efforts and do more to encourage volunteering, share best practices and raise awareness among members

- ▶ Expand the WTIA Draft Day program
 - › Create opportunities for mock interviews
 - › Engage alumni to help promote at their companies
 - › Develop soft skills
- ▶ Create opportunities for and encourage members to do pro bono work, like volunteer with talent development programs.
- ▶ Facilitate student-employer networking
- ▶ Share best practices – How are member companies interacting with external talent development programs, such as Ada, Code.org, and TEALS?

- ▶ Create more awareness among WTIA members of existing programs around the state and how they can get involved. Programs highlighted in the discussion were:
 - HR Students-Connection- Network
 - Washington State Opportunity Program
 - Professional Development
 - One on One Online curriculum
 - Computer Science programs offered to students in K-12
 - Government funded CS programs
 - TEALS
 - Pipeline Apprentice Programs with WTIA (Interns)
 - Tech Now in Every Organization
 - Assist Programs
 - "Girls who Code" (Partnerships)
 - Code.org
 - CO-OP programs

2. Problem to solve: What can we do to better align community college and other non-4-year programs with hiring needs so that we expand our talent pool?

Facilitators

▶ Ken Hang, Program Director of Software Development at Green River College

Expert

▶ Scott McKinley, Regional Dean and CEO at Northeastern University-Seattle

The group expressed concerns about both the quantity and the quality of candidates available, as well as the need for greater diversity in hiring. It also felt there needed to be a greater willingness to set aside old methods and try new approaches, including looking at students from non-traditional institutions and other people who are typically excluded from the hiring process.

In the discussion, the group characterized the gap between hiring needs and talent pool by identifying industry and educator demands:

INDUSTRY DEMANDS

- ▶ Higher volume of qualified candidates
- ▶ Training beyond tech skills – soft skills (social, team, and communication skills; adaptability; critical thinking; intellectual agility; leadership fundamentals intellectual curiosity; business knowledge; ability to work in diverse groups, customer focus)
- ▶ Job ready = "genius level" of knowledge (want candidates to be 99-100% prepared)
- ▶ Faster changes to curriculum
- ▶ Voice in curriculum design
- ▶ Off-campus academic programs
- ▶ Focus on real world problems

EDUCATORS DEMANDS

- ▶ Help with teaching soft skills
- ▶ Advisory board; other forms of collaboration and industry engagement
- ▶ Help teaching students to network and engage with employers; other career resources
- ▶ Better information sharing
- ▶ Voice in curriculum design
- ▶ Understanding of industry needs
- ▶ Larger pool of computer science faculty

2.1 Play: Expand current WTIA efforts and do more to encourage volunteering, share best practices and raise awareness among members

- ▶ Teaching fellowship – Industry employees adopt a non-traditional school and teach students soft skills, like networking, team work, and communication
- ▶ Job opportunity app/platform – shows students job opportunities and options by major; includes filter tools, like how to pick a major, and mini assessments (e.g., “what do you like to do?” and “what are your skill sets?”); has stories, role models, information on careers and salaries
- ▶ Career counseling – to help students create resumes, LinkedIn profiles, GitHub projects, and an “elevator pitch” for themselves; also to help with Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) and finding internships

3. Problem to solve: What new public-private collaborations could we create to help grow regional talent? And/or are there existing collaborations we could expand?

Facilitators

- ▶ Melanie Roberts, Ph.D., Founding Director, Emerging Leaders in Science and Society

Expert

- ▶ Patrick Pierce, President and CEO of Snohomish County Economic Alliance

In this discussion, participants talked about the 3,000 positions currently open and the shortage of talent available to fill them. A primary concern was ensuring that educational institutions were preparing students to meet employer needs, and several key skill areas were identified:

- ▶ Telecommunications and networks
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Marketing (with diverse backgrounds)

3.1 Play: Create a “Ready to Roll” free online marketplace for experienced tech contractors to connect with companies for short-term projects


- ▶ This could be done by building a new platform or using an existing platform (e.g., LinkedIn ProFinder)
- ▶ Could be done within a company or for the region
- ▶ Challenge: special requirements for government contractors
- ▶ Contact WTIA for resource names and contact info: fullcontech@washingtontechnology.org

3.2 Play: Create a training program in IoT cybersecurity

- ▶ Develop a Center of Excellence and a regional asset
- ▶ Partners – Federal government (DOE), research universities, employees (esp. veterans), industry
- ▶ Contact WTIA for resource names and contact info: fullcontech@washingtontechnology.org

3.3 Play: Create cross-sector partnerships to retain diverse employees and create a sense of connectedness to the Puget Sound region

- ▶ Challenges:
 - Many international employees who move into the region for work have a spouse/partner at home who may not be able to work due to visa issues. Without a full-time job, these partners often do not feel connected to the region. This disconnectedness sometimes leads families to leave.
 - Diverse employees who “transplant” into Puget Sound have a difficult time finding a professional support structure, and after 2-3 years, they often consider leaving the region.
 - With a limited professional network, diverse employees new to the region may find it difficult to find mentors and sponsors to help advance their careers. Moreover, established diverse hiring managers and executives may not be aware of diverse talent available in the area.
- ▶ Opportunities:
 - Regularly convene mentors, sponsors, and managers, across corporations, who are committed to developing and keeping top diverse talent in the region.
 - Establish communication mechanisms that identify diverse talent for upcoming roles – college-hire, junior individual contributor, senior individual contributor, manager, director executive.
 - Bring more awareness of community programs and community volunteer opportunities for diverse employees to share with their family members.
 - Integrate corporate philanthropic programs with non-profit organizations who serve culturally diverse communities.
 - Curate a set of regional guides to help diverse talent find a “sense of community.” Share these resources across various employers.
- ▶ Resources
 - Schools – PTA, superintendent
 - Support community – non-profit orgs, faith-based orgs
 - Colleague networking – Diverse employee networks, WTIA, professional associations
 - TAF



3.4 Play: Create “Skybox” trouble ticket system for giving tech students the hands-on experience they need to get hired

- ▶ Overview: Public organization publishes its IT trouble tickets so that students can work on them and get real world experience.
- ▶ Partners
 - Public organization to provide trouble tickets
 - University to run program with students
 - Business leaders/managers to help structure the program to ensure students are getting the right experience
- ▶ Contact WTIA for resource names and contact info: fullcontech@washingtontechnology.org

TRACK: ATTRACT TALENT TO OUR REGION

4. Problem to solve: How do we attract tech companies to foster innovative start-ups in the region?

Facilitator

► Janinne Brunyee, Partner at Boost! Collective

Expert

► Jovana Teodorovic, Director of People and Culture at Rover.com

The group identified four main challenges to attracting start-ups to our region:

Raising capital – difficult to get early stage funding

1. **Acquiring/retaining expertise/talent (mostly a Seattle area problem)** – high cost of living and transportation issues in Puget Sound area; competing with bigger companies, like Amazon, that pay more; non-compete clauses in contracts
2. **Lack of a robust entrepreneur ecosystem/community** – culture of shared learning, mentoring and successful founders helping new entrepreneurs; connections to capital
3. **Weak regional brand/identity ("Why Washington State?")** – states, like California and New York, invest much more than Washington to promote their advantages; no campaign/program to promote Washington as a great place to do business

4.1 Play: Encourage employees to join and stay with startups

Startup leadership should:

- Promote benefits beyond the paycheck – ability as an individual to make a difference
- Invest in employees through mentoring, training in soft skills, and providing real feedback that helps them grow
- Provide transparency to employees – be open to talking to them about why they want to leave and what opportunities exist where they are
- Encourage employees to provide ideas for the company and put those ideas to use
- Create opportunities for hiring diverse employees and underrepresented groups (e.g., women, minorities, people in career transition, people without 4-year degrees)

4.2 Play: Strengthen the entrepreneur ecosystem

Washington entrepreneurs should work together on the following:

- Create a Reverse Pitch program -- Enterprises pitch their business problems to a group of startups to propose a solution. This would give startups more visibility and provide companies with access to new ideas.
- Encourage state leaders to recognize importance of the tech community in the economy and promote the state as a great place for startups to locate.
- Advocate for state leadership and government to support policies that benefit entrepreneurship, such as removing non-compete clauses in employment contracts.

4.3 Play: Create a branding campaign that shows Washington State is a great place to start a business

Advantages to emphasize:

- ▶ Natural beauty, like Mount Rainier, and a variety of outdoor activities – You can go swimming and skiing
- ▶ Pioneering culture
- ▶ Cultural institutions and activities (e.g., Seattle Center)
- ▶ Highly educated and dense technical population
- ▶ Pacific Northwest lifestyle
- ▶ Diversity of businesses based here

Resources to leverage:

- ▶ Local celebrities, like the Seahawks
- ▶ Washington places people know
- ▶ Local events, like SXSW (what do we have?)

Challenges/considerations to keep in mind:

- ▶ We're competing with the Bay Area, but we don't want to become the Bay Area.
- ▶ We need to collaborate with local and state government to build a successful campaign.
- ▶ We need to involve local businesses broadly, not just businesses that are strictly tech.
- ▶ The Puget Sound region has severe problems, like traffic congestion, homelessness, and drug use, that need to be dealt with before the area can support more growth.
- ▶ We need to attract a diverse set of entrepreneurs, not just tech.
- ▶ We need to attract entrepreneurs and businesses to areas across the state, not just the Seattle area.

Things to do:

- ▶ Collect best practices, recommendations, and region's advantages from companies that successfully started here.
- ▶ Create a local community of entrepreneurs that perspective businesses could talk to.
- ▶ Get Amazon to produce a show set in Seattle.
- ▶ Have Paul Allen search for a movie project set in Seattle that he'd help produce.

THE PLAYS: SECTION TWO

PLAYS COMPANIES CAN TAKE ON TO GROW AND RETAIN TALENT WITHIN THEIR OWN ORGANIZATIONS:

TRACK: GROW TALENT INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

- **5. Problem to solve:** Are there resources individual companies can partner with to bring outside talent development programs into their businesses?

Facilitator

▶ Mikaela Kiner, CEO and Founder of UniquelyHR

Expert

▶ John Lederer, Executive Dean of North Seattle College

Corporate sponsor

▶ Heather Andersen, managing director, Accenture

This group spent time sharing best practices from their own organizations and talking about their companies' relationships with talent sources. Participants identified the following programs they felt were working well:

“TALENT DEVELOPMENT IS CREATING SYSTEMS FOR MOVING PEOPLE UPWARD IN THE ORGANIZATION BY TRAINING AND INTRODUCING NEW SKILLS.”

—John Lederer

- ▶ Learning boards where leaders share what classes they are taking so their team members know what they are learning. The company also has pages where employees can create and share their profiles within the company
- ▶ Internal leadership programs, including mentorships, speakers, and professional development planning
- ▶ Using strategic planning to create career paths for individuals, laying out what employees want to do and identifying what they need to grow, succeed and progress within the company
- ▶ Create paths for employees to coach and mentor at colleges and universities, especially on final projects

▼ **5.1 Play:** Create a database for matching job descriptions, company culture and educational requirements to candidate skill sets and values

- ▶ Provides a resource for companies for finding talent and learning what colleges are offering
- ▶ Helps prospective employees find their best job fit in the region, understand what jobs are being offered, and identify skill gaps
- ▶ Promotes in-state hiring
- ▶ Highlights gaps in skills, demand and education and identifies potential programs for filling the gaps
- ▶ Includes stories and testimonials
- ▶ Clearly defines job classifications
- ▶ IDEA: Connect to LinkedIn and WTIA Apprenti program

▼ **5.2 Play:** Create a “You, Inc” program/site that enables employees to plan and track professional progress within the company, stay relevant, promote technical and soft skills, and share goals and interests

- ▶ Helps develop a personal network
- ▶ Supports creating a development plan
- ▶ Connects to others with shared interests
- ▶ Helps focus people on their passion/goals
- ▶ Fosters happiness, creativity and engagement
- ▶ Promotes internal movement and recruiting
- ▶ Requires career coaching and manager training in coaching to succeed

▼ **5.3 Play:** Create an apprenticeship program for training and then hiring new employees (or moving current employees into new roles)

- ▶ Different from internships, which are temporary
- ▶ In-job training and development
- ▶ Addresses specific and changing needs of the organization
- ▶ Creates in-place personal/professional development (retention tool)
- ▶ Fosters relationships with external talent sources
- ▶ Requires solid definition of apprenticeship roles, competencies, skills to be developed, selection criteria, and measures of success

WTIA NOTE on apprenticeships: According to Washington Administrative Code, an apprenticeship "involves manual, mechanical, or technical skills and knowledge which require a minimum of two thousand hours of on-the-job work experience." WTIA's Workforce Institute has a registered apprenticeship program, Apprenti, for the technology industry. For more information, see apprenticareers.org.

6. Problem to solve: How can we more effectively onboard junior hires and quickly make them productive?

Facilitators

▶ Laura King, Leadership Coach at Laura L King Executive Coaching and Kate Butcher, Manager-Culture at BitTitan

Expert

▶ Darci Lee, Talent and Culture at BitTitan

The discussion opened with participants talking about their first jobs and the onboarding challenges they faced. Most people felt they received little onboarding support and talked about not getting enough time from managers and the lack of simple tools, like org charts and company directories. While improving job competence was important, the group also felt a lack of new hire confidence was a source of stress and made onboarding difficult. Participants talked about “getting lost in the shuffle” and feeling “unneeded” and “invisible,” which could be eased, they felt, through more coaching and feedback from a manager, mentor or co-worker.

6.1 Play: Produce “50 First Days” videos (inspired by “Fifty First Dates” movie), featuring the manager and co-workers, that the new junior hire can watch at the start of each work day

- ▶ Recaps the previous day and lays out the challenges and needs for the current day
- ▶ Celebrates accomplishments and provides tips to doing even better
- ▶ Is produced simply – a phone camera will do
- ▶ Ideas of things to include in the videos
 - › Have every team member take a turn making a video
 - › Record a video of the person the new hire will be shadowing that day
 - › Have the people in the videos provide fun facts about themselves
 - › Give cultural tips on how to navigate the company and the local environment
 - › Include the email address of the person featured in the video

6.2 Play: Have the new junior hire pitch an idea that would help the company to the CEO.

- ▶ Gives new hires the opportunity to interact in a personal with company leadership
- ▶ Creates a closer connection between the employee and the company and instills the idea that people matter.
- ▶ Provides an opportunity for a new hire to get the view from the top and learn about the company strategy and culture.
- ▶ Offers the CEO the chance to meet all new employees and build relationships with them.

Variations

- ▶ In large companies, new hires pitch to the senior leader of their groups.
- ▶ New hires present on any topic that interests them.
- ▶ Employees who pitch ideas that get implemented receive special recognition, a prize, and/or the opportunity to help bring the idea to life.
- ▶ In large companies, new hires with the best ideas could get funding to implement their ideas; in small companies, all new hires get support to implement their ideas.
- ▶ The company assigns a project (or projects), with a grant, to a group (or groups) of new employees, tasking them with solving a problem and implementing their solution.

6.3 Play: New junior employees create their own onboarding experience, based on their strengths and interests

- ▶ As in soccer, tell the new hires what needs to get done and, with coaching, let them develop a plan for meeting the goals, allowing them freedom and creativity.
- ▶ Help new hires discover their strengths and assign them to project teams based on those strengths.
- ▶ Give junior hires a year in the company before evaluating their performance (with regard to retention).

6.4 Play: Create a comprehensive onboarding and mentor program for junior hires

- ▶ Materials to create:
 - Playbook/onboarding manual – explains how things get done, where the resources are, who can help, org charts, maps
 - Social media site – for community building and getting questions answered quickly
 - Case studies – to demonstrate what success looks like and provide ideas as to how to get things done
- ▶ Other critical elements
 - Buddy system – assign peer mentors/supporters
 - Follow-up – check in a year from hire date to see how the employee is doing
 - Mentors and mentor training – could be a “mentor squad” with people from different areas of the company
 - Process for collecting and integrating feedback to improve the program
 - Feedback to and from the employee
 - System for storing materials and automating processes
- ▶ Things to think about
 - How would you pilot this program?
 - What can you do to support mentors and make their role easier? Does a mentor community make sense?
 - What incentives can you create for mentors?

TRACK: RETAIN TALENT INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

7. Problem to solve: How do we retain talent and with an emphasis on diversity?

Facilitators

► Christopher Ross , Partner at Boost! Collective and Martina Welkhoff, President of Seattle Women in Tech

Experts

► Michelle Melero Program Manager Application Development B.A.S. at North Seattle College and Michael Ronan, Partner at EY

Many participants in this discussion had backgrounds working with tech students of color or in training/retraining students of color. The group's goal was to think of ways to attract the diverse talent readily available and then keep them engaged and satisfied. When thinking of diversity, participants used the words: transparency, openness, accepting, opportunity, listening, learning, benefit, family, inclusiveness, accountability, vibrant, active empathy, and "beyond the office." They also talked about barriers to diversity, citing a range of things, including unconscious bias, not enough time to get to know individuals, focus on "culture fit," lack of feedback, leadership commitment and diversity at the top, indifference, and poor understanding of diversity benefits.

“IT'S POWERFUL WHEN AN EMPLOYEE SAYS THEY STAY BECAUSE THEY LOVE WHAT THE COMPANY REPRESENTS.”

7.1 Play: Create a Diversity Leadership Charter for the company

- Explains “why a charter?” – role of leaders in creating an environment where diverse employees stay and succeed
- Defines “diversity” for the organization and clearly articulates its value to the business, employees and community
- Provides goals, measures of success, and how that data will be shared with all employees (transparency)
- Lays out expectations and steps for active leadership engagement – including manager development and creating “leaders at every level” – and explains how leaders will be held accountable
- Provides resources for leaders both within and outside the company (e.g., education, non-profit and community partners)
- Reflects input from all employees
- Creates a common language of inclusiveness
- Can be shared with customers and suppliers

7.2 Play: Implement a technical (and/or other) skills certification program

- ▶ Benefit:
 - › Provides opportunities for all employees (and partners) to learn new skills, contribute more, and be rewarded.
 - › Serves as a tool for both recruiting and retaining talent
- ▶ Critical element: measuring success
 - › How does the program impact recruiting?
 - › How does the program impact retention?
 - › How does the program improve business results?
- ▶ Partners to engage for a better program:
 - › Education
 - › Government
 - › Unions
 - › Professional networks

7.3 Play: Implement an apprenticeship program

- ▶ Key actions:
 - › Define expectations for the apprentice, manager, mentors, and organization.
 - › Partner with community colleges and technical schools to identify a diverse group of candidates who may not have all the required skills but show great potential
 - › Assign the apprentice to two four-month projects
 - › Provide training to mentors and managers in supporting the apprentice and the perspective he/she brings
 - › Provide the apprentice with additional training that would prepare them for hire and mentors
- ▶ Success depends upon:
 - › Recognizing and correcting institutional biases in hiring practices; training recruiters as needed
 - › Organizational commitment to the apprentice's success
 - › Recognizing individual biases and providing training to move past them
 - › Building strong education partnerships
- ▶ Benefits:
 - › More diverse organization
 - › Employee loyalty
 - › Investment in diverse employees
 - › Organizational, individual and leadership development

WTIA NOTE on apprenticeships: According to Washington Administrative Code, an apprenticeship "involves manual, mechanical, or technical skills and knowledge which require a minimum of two thousand hours of on-the-job work experience." WTIA's Workforce Institute has a registered apprenticeship program, Apprenti, for the technology industry. For more information, see apprenticareers.org.

7.4 Play: Experiment with new ideas for retaining employees

- ▶ Create “off the clock” time for employees to get to know each other as individuals
- ▶ Develop success metrics for diversity at every level of the company and be accountable to them
- ▶ Redesign the hiring process to let go of “fit” and focus on understanding the interviewee and his/her potential contributions
- ▶ Make sure your company represents something that employees can love
- ▶ Hire from many schools, not just one
- ▶ Remove college names and other personal information from candidate resumes
- ▶ Focus on creating diversity at the leadership level to attract and retain diverse employees at every level
- ▶ Listen to diverse perspectives, even the ones that seem uncomfortable, and take the opportunity to learn, especially about problems and opportunities you’ve missed
- ▶ Promote and create opportunities for community engagement to help create a sense of purpose for employees
- ▶ Create greater transparency for employees in hiring and pay practices
- ▶ Promote affinity groups and connect to them as a voice of the organization
- ▶ Define “diversity” for your organization and create a benefit statement
- ▶ Promote the practice of asking people for their preferred pronunciation of their name
- ▶ Conduct exit surveys to learn more about why people leave the organization

A SPECIAL THANKS



We'd like to thank the many people who gave us their time, resources, and energy to make this event possible, including:

- ▶ Our WTIA Board Members, including Heather Redman, who served as the advisory committee co-chair, and Ed Lazowska, Irene Plenefisch, Alex Pietsch, and Joseph Williams, who also served as advisory committee members.
- ▶ Microsoft, for providing us with a world class location, the Microsoft Conference Center, and Stephanie Norby and the Conference Center team
- ▶ Our generous sponsors who support new ideas and cross-sector collaboration: Comcast, Microsoft, Accenture, Amazon, Bellevue College, Deloitte, Washington State Department of Commerce, Galvanize, Google, Greater Foundation, Logic20/20, Pacific Science Center, Renton Technical College, Seattle University, TriDigital, Washington State University, Crosscut, and Xconomy.
- ▶ Our outstanding advisory committee, who did far more than just advise us -- they helped us develop the content, identify speakers and facilitators, and recruit top-notch participants from around the state.
- ▶ Our moderators and speakers, who provided insight and helped shaped the day's discussions
- ▶ Our facilitators, an extraordinary group of people from across the community, who are personally and professionally committed to encouraging discussion, innovation, and developing bold ideas
- ▶ Our interns, who kept things running with a smile
- ▶ Our FullConTech 2016 participants, the authors of this report, who were willing to listen, share, learn, and collaborate to develop ideas that can help us all.

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