

CATALYTE



# INNOVATE TALENT SOURCING STRATEGIES

Create a more productive and  
diverse workforce



# TALENT SOURCING IS AT A CROSSROADS

For decades, employers large and small generally followed the same protocol for sourcing tech talent: Show me your resume. **Continuing with the same resume-focused talent sourcing strategies no longer fits today's business environment for many reasons.**

- + The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 25% increase in software developer positions from 2021-2031. At the same time, college enrollment is dropping and economic forecasts are uncertain.
- + According to one Bersin by Deloitte study, the average recruitment process takes 52 days. There's enormous pressure to fill positions quickly, knowing a great candidate may be considering multiple offers. But, making a bad hiring decision can cause repercussions across multiple departments.
- + With companies making commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), competition for entry-level tech talent keeps getting tighter. Every organization is looking for standout candidates who check a variety of boxes. But they're all using resumes to look within the same, virtually homogenous talent pools.
- + Human bias in resume screening affects decision making. And resume-based hiring excludes many high-potential candidates from developing careers in tech.

In order to overcome these roadblocks, remain competitive and achieve their desired business outcomes, employers must innovate their sourcing methods to find better qualified, more diverse candidates from historically overlooked or excluded populations. But how can they do it?

# Innovating talent sourcing strategies

The first step to innovating your sourcing strategies to hire higher quality, more diverse talent is to use technology to look beyond the resume. When done correctly, AI, machine learning and predictive analytics can eliminate human bias in initial candidate screening and help discover talent with the aptitude and attitude for success in a given role.

The next step is to partner with organizations that can provide an ongoing pipeline of talent. The knowledge, expertise and technology needed to provide this pipeline is quite extensive, making it often a best practice to tap into existing sources, rather than try and build one from scratch.

The third step to innovate your sourcing strategies is to accept reliable certifications in place of formal education or degrees. This gets to the heart of skills-based hiring, and is something Microsoft is investing in through its **Microsoft Learn Career Connected** program.

By reimagining how to source talent, organizations can:

- + **Quickly find talent with the specific Microsoft skills needed for a position.**
- + **Reduce the risks and costs associated with making a bad hire.**
- + **Simultaneously increase the quality and diversity of their workforce.**

## Three steps to innovating talent sourcing strategies



### STEP 1

Use technology to look beyond the resume.

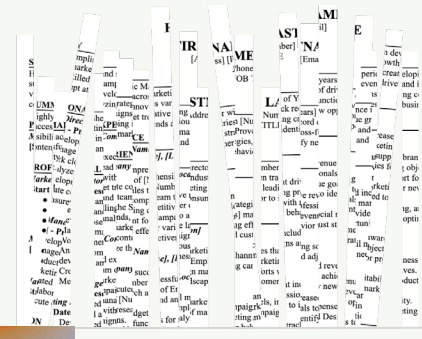
### STEP 2

Partner with organizations that provide ongoing talent pipeline.

### STEP 3

Accept reliable certifications in place of degrees.

# Use technology to look beyond the resume



Resume-based hiring became standard procedure when colleges and universities were the only places where people could develop tech skills. They were, and are, an easy method to evaluate pedigree as a proxy for performance.

However, because of their ease of use and reliance on proxies like education, name, prior work experience and even home address, **resumes are biased talent evaluation tools. They don't assess a candidate's true aptitude or future potential for growth.**

Many organizations recognize the subjective biases and other challenges inherent in the human evaluation of resumes. They have attempted to move beyond that bias by using technology to screen resumes.

Unfortunately, because technology can screen people out faster than humans can, this approach often has the opposite effect of **increasing bias in the hiring process.**

And because resumes still rely on the applicant crafting them, they can be manipulated to trick the system. Resumes stuffed with the “right” keywords, education or exaggerated work experience may make it through an initial round. But the competency of those individuals can vary greatly, while qualified candidates are easily rejected because their resume doesn't fit the algorithm's ideal profile.

Microsoft and other organizations recognize these limitations and have started to move away from resumes and degree requirements for some entry-level positions. They see this as a business imperative if they want to **source talent from the broadest possible pool and build the diverse workforce they desire.**

The public sector is doing the same. In 2022, Maryland became the first state to drop a degree requirement for thousands of state jobs, including IT positions. Other states like Colorado, Utah and Pennsylvania have followed suit.

So, if both the public and private sector are looking beyond the resume, what takes its place? How can organizations still vet and source the talent they need to thrive?

The solution is to **use technology not to screen resumes, but to screen and evaluate an individual's aptitude for success.** This takes human bias out of the equation.

By using real-world data, you can map desired outcomes back to the screening process. This allows look-alike modeling to discover individuals who have the highest likelihood of success in similar roles. And **since the technology isn't evaluating biased data like education or names, it eliminates barriers to historically excluded groups, both expanding and diversifying your talent pool.**



# No college, no problem



ALEX  
BORREGO



Alex grew up, as many kids do, interested in video games. But his interest went beyond achieving a high score. He wanted to understand how video games worked and how they were developed.

Alex went to college to study computer science, but discovered that environment wasn't for him. Without a degree, he was left contemplating his options for entering the tech industry. He then found Catalyte and its software development apprenticeship. Catalyte's AI-powered screening



Coding and seeing the result at the end seemed like such a fulfilling, amazing thing. But I didn't know where to start.

recognized his aptitude and attitude for success. Within weeks, Alex developed the necessary technology and interpersonal skills to deliver value on a client project.

Alex was placed on a team working with the Microsoft Power Platform. This work included canvas and model-driven apps, business process automation and data visualizations. Having proved himself with the company, **the client converted Alex to a full-time employee where he continues to grow his career.**

## Partner with organizations that can provide an ongoing pipeline of talent



An organization could build its own AI-based talent sourcing tool. But reaching an effective level of technology requires time, effort and an enormous amount of data.

The outcome data needed to feed this technology is five-to-twenty years in the making. That data is generated over the careers of those you've previously hired using AI-based talent sourcing. And the variances in job requirements means that each model should be role-specific. What attributes make for a strong Microsoft Power Platform developer may be different from a Microsoft support specialist.

How you deploy this technology is also critical to expanding your talent pools and creating a more productive and diverse workforce. **If you use AI to screen the same candidate pool you were already accepting resumes from, you aren't expanding your talent pool.** You could get higher-quality candidates, but you won't expand the diversity of your workforce.

By partnering with an organization that specializes in AI-based talent sourcing, **companies can improve their hiring outcomes and immediately reap the benefits of lower costs, higher retention, productivity and diversity.** When deciding on a partner to help provide an ongoing pipeline of talent, consider these six criteria.

- + **It has mature data and technology.** The foundation of any partner should be its technology. It should be able to provide the longitudinal data to show its efficacy in creating more productive and diverse workforces
- + **It has the ability to source talent where you need it.** If a partner's technology is as good as promised, it should be able to deliver a pipeline of top talent in any specified area. That ability to source and develop talent from anywhere greatly benefits organizations located outside of major tech hubs.
- + **It has connections to other organizations that are dedicated to providing opportunities to historically excluded groups.** This ensures access to talent pipelines currently beyond the reach of traditional, resume-based sourcing methods.
- + **It can match employee-specific profiles for certain roles.** AI-based talent sourcing shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all process. Different roles require screening for different attributes.
- + **It can scale into multiple career pathways.** Beyond an initial need for Microsoft-trained technologists, a partner should also be able to help with additional sourcing needs, increasing quality and diversity of talent across an organization.
- + **It can reduce hiring risks.** A partner should make the transition to these new sourcing methods as easy as possible. This includes de-risking the transition with contract-to-hire options, apprenticeships or the ability to swap talent as needed.

# Microsoft Power Platform partnership reduced costs while increasing delivery speed

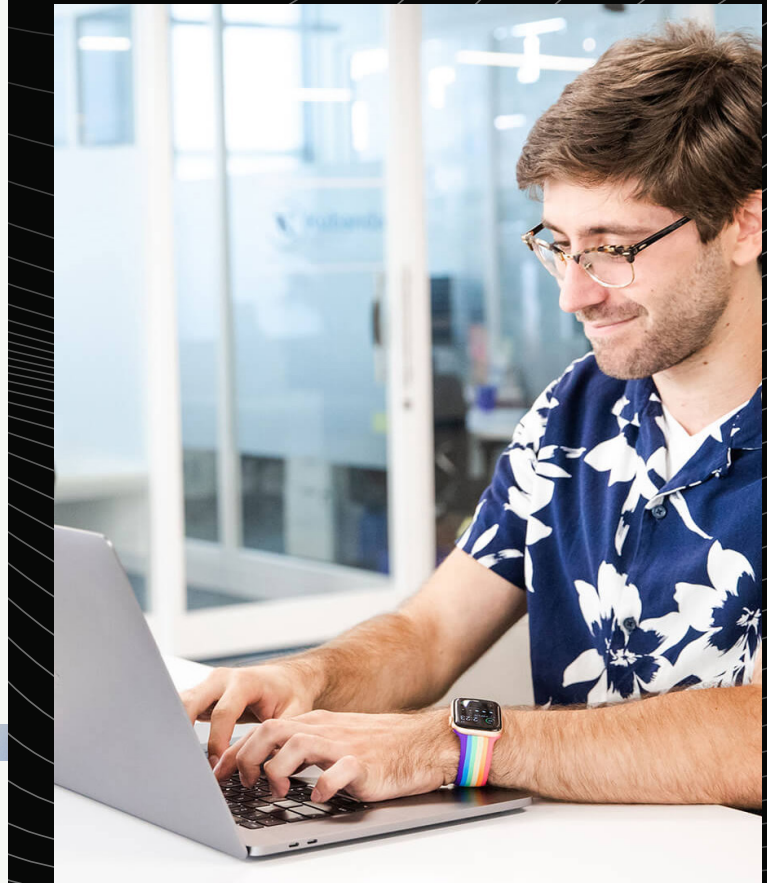
Catalyte supplied a large engineering and construction firm solely focused on the U.S. water and environmental sectors with Microsoft Power Apps-trained, client-ready apprentice software developers. This allowed the firm to support more client work with fewer resources, and more quickly and efficiently engage on new client projects.

## Apprentices deliver better quality at reduced cost

The firm tapped into Catalyte's pipeline of highly vetted apprentice software developers. Because of their aptitude and grit, these apprentices were able to quickly learn multiple Microsoft Power Platform technologies, integrate into the firm's teams and start delivering quality work for the firm's clients. This work included canvas and model-driven apps, business process automation and data visualizations. Due to lower overhead, but equal quality to more senior resources, **Catalyte apprentices are profit centers for the engineering and construction firm.**

## Driving Microsoft adoption

With Catalyte's apprentices, the firm is helping new Microsoft-trained talent launch rewarding technology careers. Through the work these



developers deliver to the firm's clients, it's also helping to spread the adoption and use of Microsoft Power Platform. This combination demonstrates the potential for other similar partnerships that can transform both individuals and organizations, creating new jobs and better business outcomes.

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Catalyte's apprentice software developers have an amazing combination of skills that allows them to ramp up and contribute quickly. It's been a game changer for a mid-sized company like ours to deliver cutting edge quality solutions at a fraction of that cost.

– Engineering and construction firm's director of application development

## Accept reliable certifications in place of education/degrees



The concept of skills-based hiring is simple: a person should be proficient in the skills needed to succeed in a specific role.

But, the reality is more complex. A list of skills on a resume does not account for proficiency. Moreover, with increasing numbers of certifications and certifying organizations, it's challenging to determine the reliability and rigor of such certifications.

**Microsoft's skilling and certification program creates a quantifiable and measurable alternative to developing tech skills**

at the collegiate level or through technology bootcamps. Because the certification comes from Microsoft, managers can trust that these new employees are qualified for the position.

Microsoft certifications benefit employers in terms of value to the company and productivity. In the 2022 IT Skills and Salary Report from Global Knowledge, 22% of IT managers reported that the added value from each credentialed staff member amounts to \$32,000 a year<sup>1</sup>.

In a study conducted by IDC, trained and certified teams responsible for core IT activities were almost 20% more productive than non-certified staff<sup>2</sup>. The IDC study also revealed that IT professionals who have achieved a relevant role-based technical certification perform on average 26% better than their colleagues with the same responsibilities<sup>3</sup>.

Microsoft's certification program also allows anyone, regardless of background, to acquire the in-demand tech skills that companies are looking for.

The program helps to expand the pipeline of tech talent to people who could not otherwise access university programs, so that organizations can meet our industry's growing demand for diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

IT certifications also accelerate earning potential. Thirty-seven percent of employees received a salary or wage increase after earning certification credentials<sup>4</sup>. For those who received an increase, 58% got it within three months of certification<sup>5</sup>.

### Microsoft Learn Career Connected

Prior to exploring a Microsoft certification path, job seekers can join **Microsoft Learn Career Connected** community program. It serves to expand the tech ecosystem, develop people who are new to Microsoft Cloud technologies, like Dynamics and Azure, and connect hiring organizations with new talent.

As a founding member of Microsoft Learn Career Connected, **Catalyte** has helped people all over the country transform their lives and earning potential by developing their tech skills. Catalyte apprentices earned Microsoft certificates that opened career opportunities at premier organizations within their industries, from media and finance to engineering and state governments.



# The three key benefits of innovating sourcing strategies

Organizations that innovate their sourcing strategies through technology, partnerships and certification programs will:

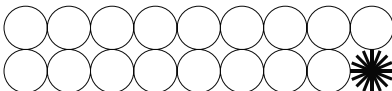

- + Quickly find talent with the specific Microsoft skills needed for a position.
- + Reduce the risks and costs associated with making a bad hire.
- + Simultaneously increase the quality and diversity of their workforce.

Innovating helps organizations **quickly find talent with the specific Microsoft skills** needed for a position. Every day, thousands of career changers and entry-level workers use Microsoft Learn Career Connected to begin exploring career paths in tech. Organizations like Catalyte recognize the value and potential of this talent pool and have become partners to help develop these workers' skills through certification and development programs. In turn, these certifications establish an objective standard for measuring skill and allow

partners to find a specific match for their hiring needs.

Innovating helps organizations **make smarter hiring decisions and reduces the risks and costs associated with a bad hire.** Working with a sourcing partner ensures that candidates are thoroughly vetted using quantifiable data based on real-world outcomes and matched to the skills, culture and employee profile designated by the organization. And finally, the apprenticeship period allows the talent and organization to develop together before making a full-time commitment.

Innovating leads to a **more productive and diverse workforce** that better reflects America's demographics. By removing hiring barriers and subjective bias, organizations can source beyond the 30% of Americans who hold college degrees and access a greatly expanded pool of people previously excluded from careers in tech. These workers bring valuable and diverse ways of thinking that result in higher retention and a **smarter, more productive workplace.**

	Resume-based talent sourcing	Technology-enabled talent sourcing
SCREENING FOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Pedigree</li> <li>+ Education</li> <li>+ Experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Aptitude</li> <li>+ Attitude</li> </ul>
TOTAL TALENT PIPELINE		
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Unreliable quality</li> <li>+ Non-diverse</li> <li>+ Limited pipeline</li> <li>+ Can't scale</li> <li>+ Expensive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Vetted talent</li> <li>+ Diversity done right</li> <li>+ Largest talent pipeline</li> <li>+ Ready on day one</li> <li>+ Low risk</li> </ul>

# CHANGING THE WAY THE WORLD SOURCES TALENT

Talent sourcing has not evolved on pace with business or society. Companies that stick with traditional, resume-focused sourcing strategies are missing opportunities to hire from a wider pool of qualified talent. Talent that can bring valuable diversity of experience to a workplace and drive productivity.

Companies that innovate and adapt their sourcing strategies to access untapped pools of talent **will have a competitive advantage** over those that continue to rely on traditional sourcing methods.

**Microsoft certifications, Microsoft Learn Career Connected** and partners like **Catalyte** are can help deliver that advantage, developing today's high-potential talent into tomorrow's high-performing tech workers.

## SOURCES

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3. Op. Cit., Benefits of Role-Based Certifications.
4. 2023 Value of IT Certification | Candidate Report, Pearson VUE, 2023.
5. Op. Cit., 2023 Value of IT Certification.