

HOW ONE COMPANY
RECRUITED
TECH TALENT
IN AMERICA'S MOST
COMPETITIVE CITY
WITHOUT
OVERPAYING

A CASE STUDY BY
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Problem: A *Fortune 1000* staffing company in Tacoma, WA was having trouble attracting qualified candidates for vital technology positions. Jobs sat vacant for months. The vacancies were costing the company thousands of dollars in outsourcing fees. In addition, the vacancies meant more work for the IT team, which hurt morale.

The marketing director listed three explanations for the problem:

1. **Location:** Tacoma was 30 to 60 minutes south of Seattle by car. The city's reputation suffered from its past as a paper mill town ("smells like eggs!") and a higher-than-average crime rate.
2. **Pay:** The company paid its IT employees about 15% lower than comparable positions in the Seattle Metropolitan Area.
3. **Competition:** The Seattle region was home to many tech giants (Amazon, Microsoft, Expedia) and hot young startups. Programmers and developers wanted to work for a "cool" company, not a staffing provider.

Solution: Four job postings for critical positions needed to be rewritten -- quickly. The first thing I did was to replace the boilerplate introductions with a quick elevator pitch explaining the who, what, and where of the company.

I then restructured the posts from endless bullet points (which risk discouraging applicants who don't meet every requirement) to short paragraphs. Using a friendly tone, as if I were talking to *one* person, I listed only the most important responsibilities of the job.

I asked for HR's permission to include the salary range for each post. This served two purposes: (1) it demonstrated the company's down-to-earth culture by addressing a sensitive issue -- salary, and (2) discouraged applicants who would've dropped out later in the process, upon learning the salary.

The goal of each posting was to remove barriers, so that qualified applicants felt comfortable taking the first step. The call to action in each of the four revised postings was a short essay question, rather than a resume upload. This allowed the IT department to rate the applicant based on a real-life problem, rather than credentials alone. The contact person was a real HR person, with a phone number and email, rather than a nameless, faceless entity.

Results: The revised job postings went live. They attracted enough quality applicants so that each position was filled inside of a month.

Read on to see the before and after of the first job posting.

Make your living making a difference

_____ is the nation's leading provider of industrial staffing and outsourced workforce solutions. Publicly traded since 1995, the company provides work opportunities to over half million people through firms such as: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

As a Senior SQL Database Administrator

You will function in the leadership roles to ensure the production SQL Server Instances meet the _____ data management standards.

What you'll do

- Review proposed database designed ensuring adherence to _____ policies and standards
- Recommends strategies for process improvement within the _____ Enterprise
- Recommends strategies for ensuring the security and integrity of the company database
- Troubleshoot SQL Server service outages as they occur
- Troubleshoot complex SQL Server Performance issues
- Implement and maintain _____ Microsoft SQL Server environment documentation
- Strong knowledge of SQL Server Internals
- Establish and maintain communication with Business Partners with period status updates.

What you bring to the table

- Associates Degree + 9 years of experience or Bachelor Degree + 7 years experience in a related field or equivalent work experience.
- Several years hands-on experience administering Microsoft SQL which include SQL2008/2012 and above.
- Several years experience with Windows and SQL Clustering configurations.
- Familiar with industry standards for Data Processing including A.C.I.D theory
- Working knowledge of ITIL principles and practices.
- Participate in On-Call rotation

As a _____ employee you can

- Make a difference in other peoples' lives.
- Be a part of a dynamic and diverse team.

- Be recognized for your contributions.
- Grow and develop personally and professionally.

At _____ we believe in creating limitless possibilities for employees, workers and customers. We are in the opportunity business. We are guided by our values: Be true, be passionate, be responsible, be creative and be respectful. _____e employs approximately 4500 professionals and provides a competitive compensation and benefits package including: Company-matching 401(k); Employee Stock Purchase Program; Tuition Reimbursement; College Savings Fund; and comprehensive Health Insurance including Medical/Dental/Vision.

We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Senior SQL Database Administrator

XXX is the nation's largest blue-collar staffing and recruiting provider. We are a publicly traded company assigning up to 100,000 people to work daily. In 2014, Forbes named us one of America's 100 "Most Trustworthy Companies."

Our corporate headquarters is three blocks from the water, in beautiful, downtown Tacoma. Business has been very good to us; in the last two years alone, our revenue has grown by double digits. As you can imagine, with that kind of growth, we're in need of more talent. We're hoping you can help us with that!

We're looking for a Senior SQL Database Administrator to oversee and insure that all new instances added to servers conform to our data management standards. We use Microsoft SQL Server (2008, 2012, 2014).

As you're aware, a Senior SQL Database Administrator's job can sometimes get a little hectic -- between troubleshooting, performance issues, backups, restorations, and working off-hours. On top of that, you'll be a leader to junior team members with less experience.

However, we'll do everything possible to help make your work a joy. The plain truth is, XXX couldn't do what we do -- staff, recruit, and manage workers all across the U.S. -- without safe and reliable SQL Servers.

For your services, we can pay in the XXX range plus a signing bonus. We offer standard but generous benefits -- 401K, PTO, tuition reimbursement -- and we sweeten the deal with a free on-site gym.

XXX *might* be the most down-to-earth large corporation in the Greater Seattle region.

We have to be -- our clients demand it. In the past, Senior Database Administrators have gone on to management positions within the IT department. We love keeping good people here and love watching them succeed!

If everything you've read so far sounds good, we'd love to hear from you. Simply send an email at ___@XXX.com with "**Senior SQL Database Administrator**" in the subject line.

Include a link to your LinkedIn profile, personal website, or Github page.

As part of your email, please answer this question in about 500 words: "*What are some things you might consider to speed up a database with performance issues? Why?*" As a reminder, at XXX we use Microsoft SQL Server.

We're interested in how you think, so please walk us through each step of your answer.

Thank you for considering a career with XXX. We will respond promptly, within two days, to your completed application.

Would you like me to apply the same treatment to your job postings? Extended vacancies cost your company in dollars and morale. Shoot me a no-obligation email at mike@mikedevaney.com to discuss.

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