isl

REPORT

The UK tech skills shortage

Practical solutions tech companies can implement

Innovation in technology is excelling at a rapid pace, placing an ever increasing demand on tech skills, in what is an industry already suffering from a long standing talent war down to a lack of skills.

Roles that didn't exist 10 years ago are now the ones that are in the highest demand, jobs such as, App Developer, UX Architect and Cloud Computing Specialist.

According to Monster.com, these are the roles tech companies find the hardest to fill due to the skills shortage:

1. Data Analytics
2. Security
3. Cloud computing
4. Cyber security
5. IT architecture

Research performed by Undercover Recruiter found, the five top strategies that businesses are using to tackle the skills shortage include:

- Using temporary or contract workers to fill the skills gap **(63%)**
- Engaging recruitment agencies **(53%)**
- Using internal training to upskill and/or moving internal staff into more senior positions **(51%)**
- Using external training to upskill current staff **(38%)**
- Advertising for staff through LinkedIn **(38%)**

The skills shortage in tech is nothing new, and certainly doesn't look like it's going disappear anytime soon. So it's time to think practically, what can we all be individually doing to find the best tech talent? We're going to need to widen the talent pool and get creative.
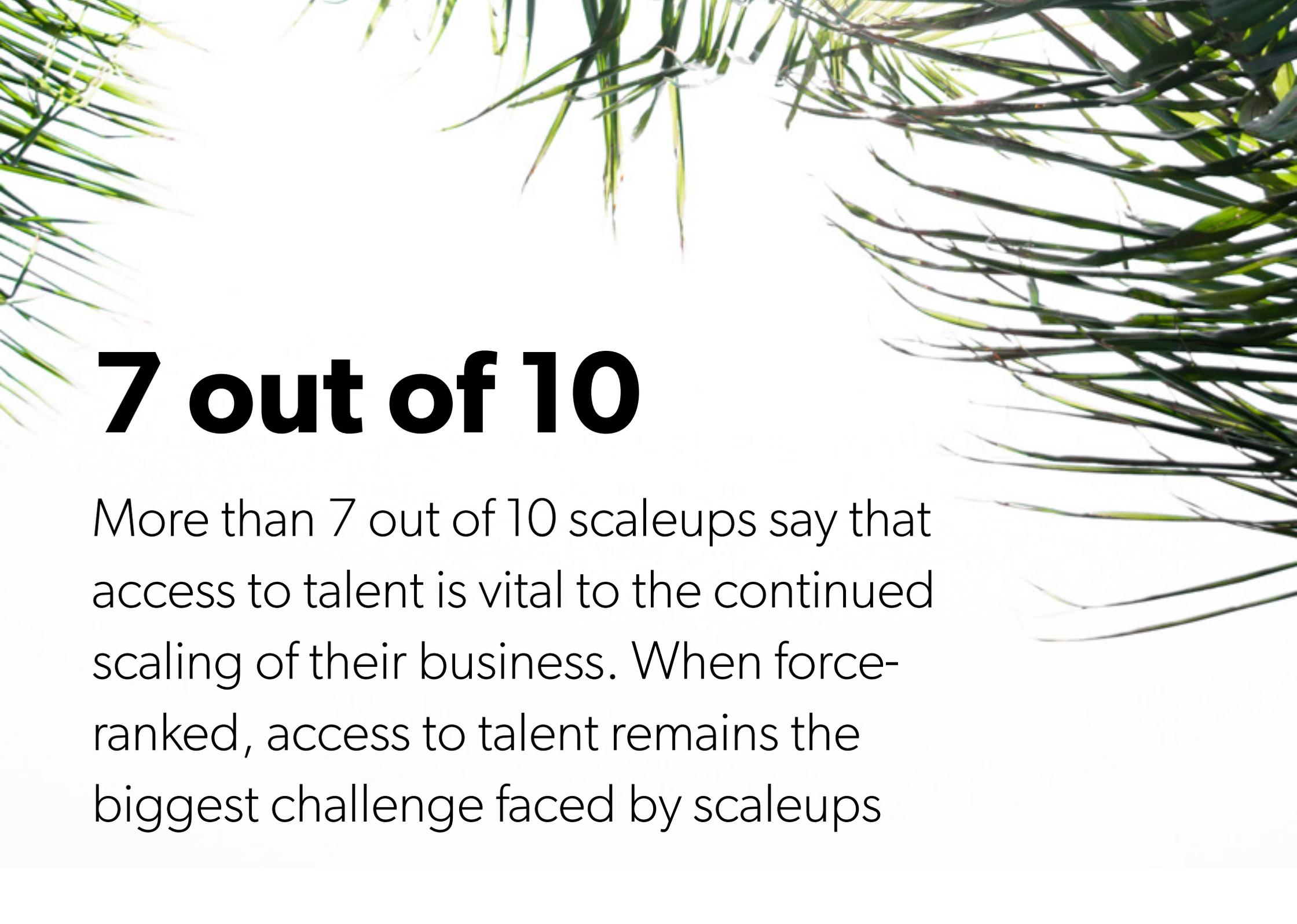
7 out of 10

More than 7 out of 10 scaleups say that access to talent is vital to the continued scaling of their business. When force-ranked, access to talent remains the biggest challenge faced by scaleups

1. Returnships

[1.8 million women and 0.2 million men](#) in the UK are currently not in paid employment as they are looking after family. Of those 2 million, a quarter of those taking career breaks want to return to work at some point- most of these being highly qualified, with at least [10 years of experience](#) behind them.

The biggest names in tech are already on board with Returnships, companies such as; IBM, O2, Capgemini and Amazon Web Services. Typically, the length of a Returnship is 3 to 6 months and programmes can run for one person or a group. Many opt for training in groups as this is the most cost effective way of training. For the returners, it brings the benefit of a peer support network that will naturally form within these groups.

HOW CAN I IMPLEMENT THIS?

1. Think about what benefits you can provide. It's not just about the money. You need to be able to offer the right amount of support and structure, as well as flexibility. Have this in place before leaving a returner feeling stranded or burnt out.

2. Do you have the resources to help rebuild their confidence levels?

3. Is the rest of your company on board with the Returnships scheme? By providing an inclusive culture, you'll increase the chances that they will want to stick around once the programme has finished, and long into the future.

4. Treat your first returnship as something you can learn from. Ask for feedback surveys to be filled out at intervals during the course. Be reactive with what is fed back to you.

5. Ensure there are career progression pathways mapped out and a range of opportunities available to them when the returnship finishes.

30%

Vodafone have reached 30% of their goal to have more women in management & leadership roles since launching their reconnect programme

Via 'Where woman work'
Vodafone ReConnect Programme

2. Internships & Apprenticeships

Are you still writing 'must have a university degree in relevant subject' on your job ads? You've automatically just narrowed down your talent pool significantly.

[70% of Gen Z candidates](#) say they would consider an option that provided learning on the job after secondary school rather than going down the traditional route of university. And if Gen Z isn't on your radar, it should be. [60% of the global workforce](#) will be Gen Z by the end of 2020. What better way to increase your talent pool than introducing internships and apprenticeships?

HOW CAN I IMPLEMENT THIS?

1. There are legal obligations as an employer to adhere to when taking on an apprentice.

2. Are you eligible for the Apprenticeship Levy? This is a scheme that is available to large UK organisations with an annual payroll of over £3 million.

3. You'll need to have available resources dedicated to training your apprentice or intern. It will be time consuming and will certainly come with associated costs, have you calculated the return on investment you would need to see to make it viable?

4. Retention will be key. If you spend time and money on developing your own talent, keeping hold of that talent will be paramount. Ensure you have plans in place to enhance your employee retention rate, and how to measure it over time.

5. Is there a job waiting for them once they have completed their training? Ensure the options available to them are made clear, and that you're able to map out how they can progress and develop after the apprenticeship/ internship. Highlighting the mid-long term development opportunities will be vital.

6. Consider protecting your investment by including a clause- If your apprentice leaves within a certain amount of time, or before training is up, your company can claim back all or part of training costs.

36 million

since 2010, the uk government has provided £36 million in funding towards apprenticeships

Via Just IT

3. Training employees internally

The [ISL retention report](#) found 77% of tech professionals consider leaving a role when they saw a distinct lack of training or progression.

Clearly, training and progression is really important to employees so why not use this to your advantage? Training internally will not only close the skills gap your company is experiencing but will increase your retention too.

HOW CAN I IMPLEMENT THIS?

1. You'll need to identify your training plan before you start, including pin pointing which skills are needed to be developed with a timeline of clear milestones and deadlines.

2. Consider hosting brown bag lunches, where all employees can learn on their lunch. This is a cost effective approach to internal training.

3. Ensure the training you're offering aligns with your employee's ambitions and desires. There should be a balance between the skills you need to internally develop, and the skills your employees see as beneficial for their personal development.

4. Consider which route would be best for you to explore- whether that is internal training (whether this is through 1 on 1 sessions, conferences, online training, university courses etc.) or outsourced training.

5. Identify the right process for employee selection – if you're spending a significant cost on funding a university course, it's vital the individual's chosen have the correct motivations and have a strong likelihood of staying with your company after the training for you to see the ROI.
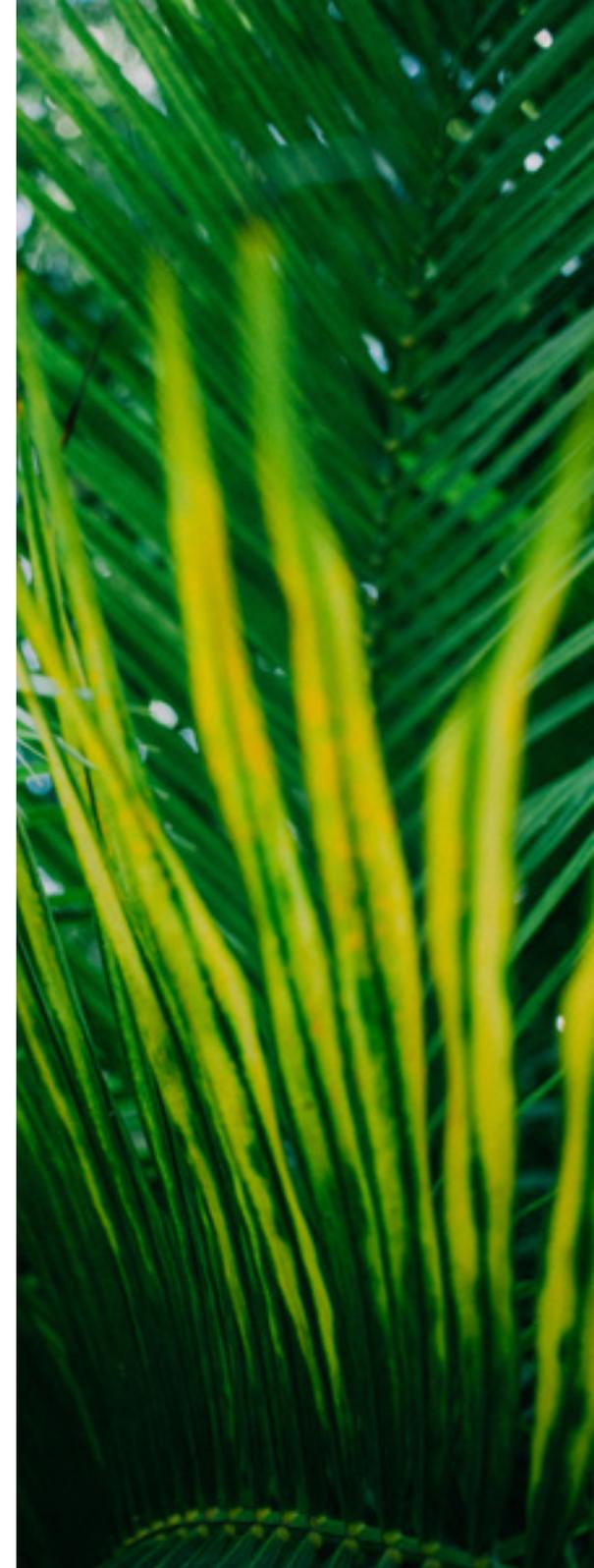
45%

of businesses are investing in an internal development strategy to leverage the skills of their current workforce

Via Jobsite

All three routes hold many benefits for your company, it's about finding the right one for you. As well as closing the skills gap for your company you'll also open the door to; wider talent pools, improved retention and increased diversity. If you're looking for more help on one of these topics mentioned, you'll find these reports handy:

Retention report for tech scaleups

Diversity, inclusion and diversity mini-report

If you'd like any more information on this topic, get in touch with one of our expert consultants today

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