



Recruiting Cybersecurity Candidates

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Introduction

Here at InquisIT, we took cybersecurity recruiting head on with integrated agency-wide collaboration software that unified remote work communications, keeping agencies we support 100% operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Problem

COVID-19 has accelerated the use of a remote workforce, and there are advantages we can take from this swift change to our work culture.

Even before COVID-19 there was a serious need for cybersecurity support, with a gap of 500,000 open cybersecurity jobs. The demand has only increased during the pandemic.

If we take advantage of the remote capacity of this role, then it greatly opens our pool of cybersecurity resources. There is a unique opportunity in the current job market with high unemployment rates, and an abundance of cybersecurity roles available to take advantage and diversify our cybersecurity workforce.

While it may cost millions for our adversaries to build robust weapons that could circumvent our defenses, cyber attacks are among the cheapest and easiest ways to create civil havoc and potentially undermine US democracy. With countries like China graduating over 12X as many engineers as the US¹ annually, the threat to our Nation's infrastructure is both real and urgent. This has driven a huge demand in cyber-talent. Some estimate there will be over 3.5 million unfilled cybersecurity roles by 2021² and over 50 percent of companies report a shortage of qualified cybersecurity talent. Finding, cultivating, and retaining cybersecurity talent are struggles the Federal Contracting market must tackle.



"If you aren't prioritizing hiring or training for IT security[,] then it's time to rethink your company's core priorities. Cybercrime is projected to cost the globe \$6 trillion annually by 2021, according to a recent report from Cybersecurity Ventures."³

-Forbes

InquisIT's recruiting team takes the cybersecurity recruiting challenge head on. We have developed several methods to attract and retain Cybersecurity candidates. —————

Competitive Pay

Salary is a crucial part of a candidates' consideration for where they venture to work. Therefore, we take the time to truly understand the market, which is no longer a quick salary survey or comparison to GOVCON exclusively.

Candidates have healthy opportunities awaiting them in the private sector. Cyber candidates know the kind of pay they can earn, so educating our staff and even our candidates in open discussion will help us stay competitive and attract leading engineers.



Cyber Pay - Market Statistics

Cynet 2020 Cybersecurity Salary Survey Results⁴

Geolocation Matters



Security analysts in North America get significantly higher salary than in EMEA and APAC, with more than 80% earning between US \$71K and \$110K. In contrast, less than 35% in EMEA and 21% in APAC earn equivalent salaries.

Degrees



A degree does not guarantee higher compensation. All analyzed positions feature similar salary range distribution for both employees with or without a degree in computer science or a related engineering field.

Quality Beats Experience



Individuals were analyzed across all positions and those quality professionals with little experience were at the top of the payment curve, while seasoned veterans were at the bottom.

Highest Pay in Industry



Banking and finance provide the highest salaries in the industry: This holds true for both strategic management and tactical positions.

Pivoting Pays



Individuals that pivoted from an IT occupation to a cybersecurity position earned more than their peers that started out in cybersecurity.

Bonuses Matter



With the exception of security analysts, all other positions included periodic bonuses with annual rates ranging between one and ten percent.

Brand Marketing Stand Out From the Rest!

We understand the need to provide an overall strong compensation package to cyber candidates. But compensation is no longer enough.

Candidates working in the cybersecurity field know they are sought after, and money is important, but so is the overall experience with the right culture, challenges, and purpose in this ever-changing field.

We also know that strong cyber candidates are always looking to work with the latest technology and tools. Providing candidates opportunities around technology partnerships, increased training allowances, participation in conference, etc., all entice the strongest candidates.

At InquisIT we developed a unique culture with benefits that have resulted in positive feedback and generated interest in our program, helping us recruit strong cybersecurity professionals to elevate our service offerings to the next level.

As part of our recruiting and retention strategy, we put together a team of engineers, I-FORCE, that develop new solutions for our current customers, and are encouraged to research new technologies in support of customer missions. Additionally, InquisIT's I-Force team has a direct voice in leadership, supporting the overall sales and technical direction of the firm, a key cultural component lacking in most organizations and preventing engineers from stepping up.

"IT security talent who are actively working today rank an improved work-life balance, having their security concerns taken seriously, increased sponsorships of certifications, increased investments in emerging tech and clearly defined ownership of security needs as the core offerings they value most from employers[.]"⁵

I-Force Benefits

InquisIT offers several additional benefits to encourage the I-Force team to go beyond the typical call of duty and commit to the success of our federal customers and our company.



Career growth



Full health benefits for the employee and their family



Professional development budget



Be a part of the guiding force setting the company direction and capabilities



Go-to group for innovative solutions



Attend a weeklong conference of their choice anywhere in the US



An extra week of PTO



An escape from tedium



Quarterly meetings with the team

At InquisIT, our culture and our team of engineers within I-FORCE are top selling points to attract strong incoming cybersecurity candidates. When a candidate shows excitement about the wide range of benefits and involvement in I-FORCE beyond just a dollar amount, we know we are finding a candidate that wants to take their career to the next level!



Cyber-Community Involvement – Reaching Out

Given rapidly emerging threats and constantly evolving methods of defense, it is important for our organization to remain knowledgeable and up to date. To this end, we find it is imperative to go into the field and connect with members in cyber communities directly.

Having this involvement assures knowledge of the latest

and greatest trends keeping us connected to those on the forefront of the field. As a result, being engaged with the cyber community brings our cyber positions to the talent's doorstep directly.

Methods by which we engage include building relationships with organizations that facilitate apprenticeship

programs and mentoring of our next generation of cyber talent. It is paramount to proactively reach out to- and create relationships with- these types of cyber programs to include colleges and universities, trade schools, and local avenues to solve both today and tomorrow's challenges.

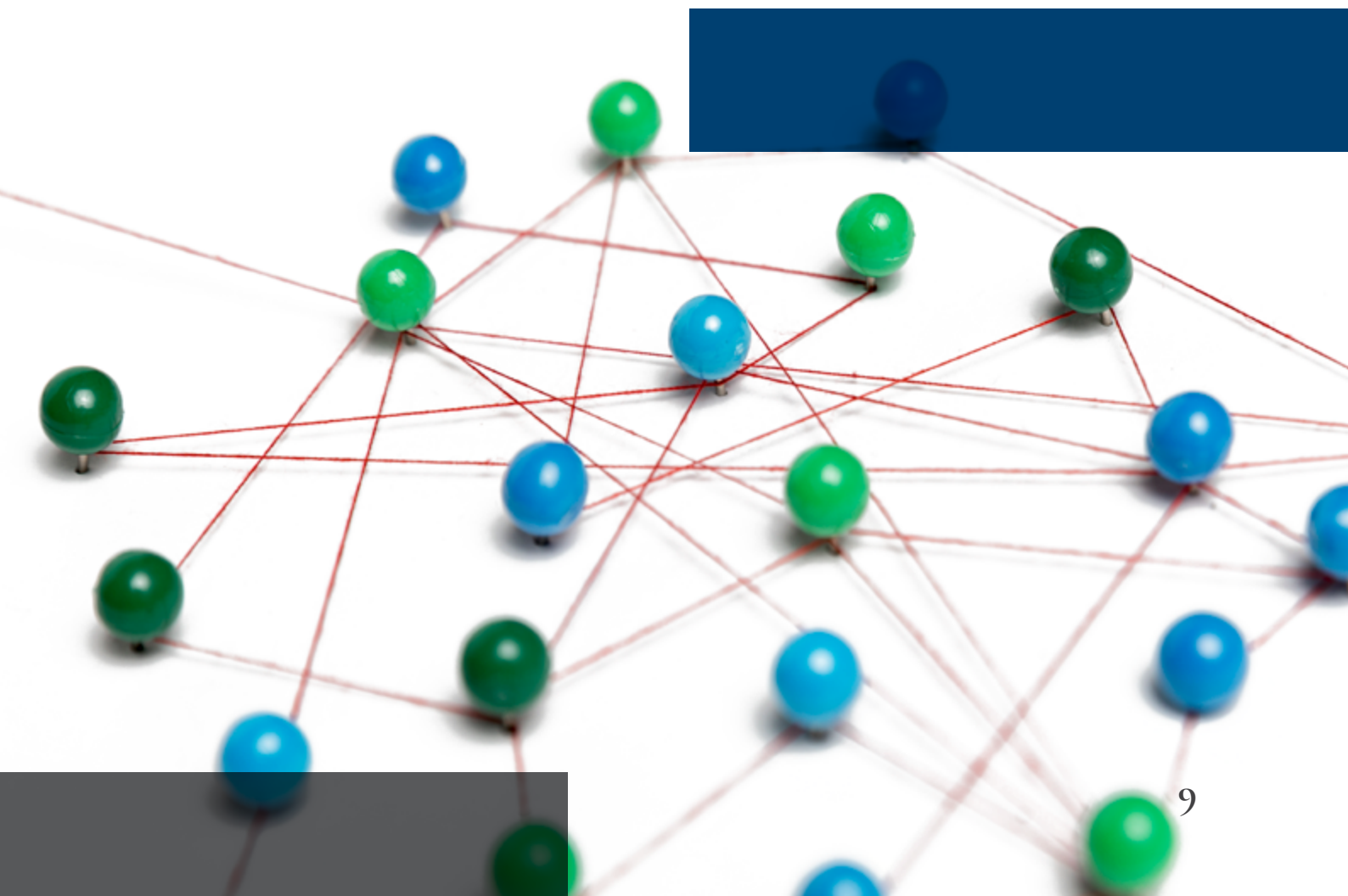
Focus on Key Skills Required with Flexibility for the Right Fit!

It is important for recruiters to understand exactly what incoming candidates need to be successful in their new role while also having flexibility.

While there are technical boxes to check, we want candidates that show drive and passion for their craft. It is easy to overstate position requirements especially when working with hiring managers under significant pressure. We

take special care to understand our customers' requirements, breaking down the "must haves" versus the "nice-to-haves" that can be quickly learned on the job or through training. We do not sacrifice the quality of our candidates for some "nice to haves".

By opening up the widest pool, we enhance our odds of finding the best cybersecurity candidates and overall fit for our federal customers.



Conclusion

Cybersecurity provides challenges to traditional recruiting strategies, but it also provides a great opportunity for growth and expansion. Finding unique ways to attract this top talent means success in growing the prowess of our team and business. ■

"Whether under the title of CISO, Director of Security, or even CIO, one cannot protect their organization single-handedly. At the end of the day, a cybersecurity professional is part of a team which makes recruiting and retaining talent an imperative."⁶

References

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² Morgan, S. "Cybersecurity Talent to Create 3.5 Million Unfilled Jobs Globally by 2021." Cybercrime Magazine. (Oct, 2019). <https://cybersecurityventures.com/jobs/>

³ Johnson, T. "How to Hire and Train for IT Security in 2019." Forbes. (Mar, 2019). <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinessdevelopmentcouncil/2019/03/21/how-to-hire-and-train-for-it-security-in-2019/#636d1e081301>

⁴ "2020 Cybersecurity Salary Survey Results." Cynet. (2020). <https://go.cynet.com/hubfs/2020-Salary-Survey-Report.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.



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