

Retaining digital talent.

Online adspend is up, the digital space is growing and so are the salaries of those in the industry. Yet there is a widespread digital talent deficit - agencies and brands alike are struggling to find qualified people to fill their digital vacancies.

We believe the key to strong digital teams lies in a successful combination of talent attraction and staff retention. Attracting fresh blood is essential to growth, and to the overall future of the digital sector. Retaining talent is important for a whole bunch of reasons – it's time-and-cost-efficient, it creates benefits for your customers, it enhances your employer brand and it safeguards your competitive edge.

But what can employers do to retain staff in a market where their competitors are willing to offer big salaries to prise talent away?

From the conversations we have with the numerous digital professionals we meet on a daily basis, the secret to staff attraction and retention isn't really much of a surprise at all. Money aside, what people in the digital space really want from their jobs is two things: development and progress.

Smart, analytical people are the norm in the digital industry. It's understandable that those people will want a digital job that will take them places and enable them to further utilise their skills. Talented people generally want to take on responsibility, develop and face challenges.

Smart people also want to know that they are going to be given opportunities to develop the skills they already have, especially across the digital verticals.

It's not just job-seekers who cite these issues. Development and opportunities for career progress have also been highlighted as an area where employers can improve by experts from within the digital space. Amanda Davie, Founder and Managing Director of digital management consulting firm Reform, spoke to us recently about the current digital talent landscape. She suggests that talent development – or the lack of it -is something that the industry urgently needs to address:

"Most digital specialists are acquired (through external recruitment), rather than grown organically. Little is done to embed or transfer these skills within the organisation, and often digital teams are siloed and shoved into the darkest corner of the building. As a consequence, new digital hires invariably leave within less than twelve months, and staff churn rates are astronomically high – especially across the agency sector (I heard 80% from one large agency network)."

And the thing is, well-thought-out development and progression plans will not only help you retain your staff, they will benefit you when you are looking for new talent too. Next time you are looking to fill a mid to senior level role you won't need to look further than your own team.

So if you want to keep hold of your digital talent – and attract more – make sure you have plans for their futures. Because they certainly have.