



**WHY IS IT SO HARD TO  
HIRE SOFTWARE  
ENGINEERS?**

According to several polls, most hiring managers feel it's challenging to find and hire software engineers. At the same time, software engineers are in high demand across a broad range of sectors. From finance and healthcare to cybersecurity and cloud computing, software engineers play a fundamental role in maintaining our digital world.

This begs the question: **if software engineers are in high demand, why is it so hard to hire them?** In this blog post, we're going to take a closer look at this strange paradox.

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## The right developer is hard to find

Some say there simply aren't enough software engineers out there. But this is not true. The issue isn't a lack of software engineers; it's finding the right one for your business.

For instance, while software engineers who use Python are pretty abundant, Ruby developers are much harder to find, with many companies migrating from Ruby on Rails to more modern stacks like Python (Django, FastAPI) or JavaScript (Node.js), so fewer developers are choosing Ruby as their primary language.

However, if your business needs a web developer or backend engineer, you may require a candidate familiar with several programming languages. Specialisations matter — it's important to find someone with hands-on experience in building and maintaining your particular production-level software.

And even if you find one, that's only half the battle. A strong developer with the right skills isn't enough; they need to understand the nuances of the industry they work in. A fintech company may hire an absolute prodigy of a software developer, but what if they don't know anything about secure transaction processing or compliance regulations? That 'on-paper' brilliance falls apart in the face of real-world demands.

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On top of all this, software developers need to be continually evolving. With new software comes the need for new, unique skills, and not all tech professionals have them.

## ***Software engineers are expensive***

Software engineers know how valuable they are. More and more businesses of all sizes are competing for the same set of skills, which means that developers are demanding top compensation. Permanent salaries for software engineers in the UK average around £58,000 and commonly go beyond £70,000, with senior developers often earning north of £100,000. Senior contractors can command in excess of £700 per day.

With both small startups and colossal global corporations competing for the same talent, seasoned candidates have much more leverage. They know they'll secure a job at a well-paying company, one way or the other. Being in this advantageous position, counteroffers can skyrocket. Not long ago, salary bumps rarely exceeded 10%; now, they commonly range between 20-30%.

After all, a single great developer can outperform an entire team, so the best ones get multiple offers. As shown by a survey from Namely, a disappointing compensation package is a common reason candidates decline a job offer. So, not only is the right one hard to find, they cost a pretty penny.

## ***An endless hiring process***

With software engineers, CVs and cover letters don't mean much. You can't filter by years of experience; even someone with 10 years under their belt may not write the code you need. Nor can you rely on specific certifications, like in many other fields. So you have to meet them — again and again.

Of course, being thorough is important; you need the right candidate. But some hiring processes can be drawn out to the point of being flawed. In lieu of certifications, businesses tend to compensate with multi-stage interviews, expecting candidates to pass intensive coding challenges, system design whiteboarding, live coding sessions, and behavioural interviews.

These various stages can be stressful and take a long time, leading to potentially capable candidates dropping out, but they may also fail to measure real-world skills. Someone could be a great developer but not a good test taker. Some may just struggle in traditional interview settings, uncomfortable with being put on the spot, while mediocre developers who talk a good game could breeze through.



This drawn-out process isn't just frustrating for candidates and can cause interviewers to seek out the prized unicorn developer. One can take 'getting the right candidate' too far. Instead of focusing on what skills are actually needed for the role, companies may fixate on finding an expert in multiple programming languages, DevOps, and AI who can also speak Mandarin and Russian! It's an impossible find, and it means perfectly acceptable candidates may be overlooked just because they don't tick every box.

## **Find your ideal software engineer with Carson Harris Associates**

Struggling to find a software engineer who meets your needs? If so, Carson Harris Associates is here to help.

Over the years, we've matched businesses of all kinds throughout the UK and Europe with high-quality software engineering candidates. We don't overwhelm you with CVs or mismatched candidates. Instead, we take the time to understand exactly what you need, then connect you with skilled professionals who fit your bill.

To learn more, feel free to get in touch with me by phone or email, and I'll be happy to explore your options with you.

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## About Us

Carson Harris Associates was founded by Simon Carson in 2004 as an executive search firm specialising in UX/UI, software engineering and app development.

Simon has over 30 years of experience in the industry, having served previously as the Sales Director of US based, Management Search International. As Managing Director of Carson Harris, Simon oversees our business development and client relationship management, and is on hand to provide one to one guidance on all aspects of the hiring process.

Our delivery teams are based in London, Dublin, and Nairobi, and our consultants have hands-on experience in their specialist fields.

With collaboration always at the heart of what we do, our partner companies now range from startups to globally recognised brands.

At Carson Harris, we've got a proven track record of consistently securing desired outcomes for the companies we work with.

Generating CVs and portfolios is the easy part of recruitment. Understanding the talent behind them is where Carson Harris excels. We give our partners solutions rather than options.

**Carson Harris Associates Ltd,**

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## Testimonials

“We’ve been using Carson Harris for over five years now, since our early startup days, and they’ve been an integral part of our journey. From the outset, they became our first choice for product and UX roles—two areas that are absolutely crucial to the success of our company. Their deep understanding of our needs and ability to deliver top-tier talent has been key to our team’s growth”

**Hemal Vaghela**

“Carson Harris have been on our PSL for many years and always one of our first go to’s for software devs and UX designers. They build proper relationships and the calibre of candidate they provide is always top notch. I’ve dealt with dozens of agencies over the years and Carson Harris will always be one of my favourites for the professionalism they provide as well as the relationships I’ve built with them. Could not recommend them more highly!”

**Sarah Lamontagne**

“ I have used Carson Harris for both perm and contract placements and wholeheartedly recommend them. I always feel incredibly well taken care of and like I am their number one priority. The quality and speed of the short-listing is unmatched and the way they understand how to pitch my company and to manage the candidate flow is great. No-nonsense, refreshingly honest recruiters.”

**Adina Kuse**