



**Developers Aren't Lazy. Your
Hiring Funnel Is Just Dumb.**

“This candidate dropped out after the take-home.”

“They didn’t respond after the coding challenge.”

“No one’s finishing our HackerRank screen.”

The story always ends the same way:

“Developers these days are just lazy.”

Here’s the truth: they’re not lazy. Your hiring funnel is just dumb.

It’s overengineered, misaligned, and built for the wrong era. And it’s quietly driving the best engineers away from your company—before you even get a chance to talk to them.

Let’s dissect what’s broken, why it’s costing you top-tier talent, and how to rebuild a hiring process that actually works.

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The Myth of the Lazy Developer

They'll:

- Refactor legacy code for 12 hours straight
- Learn an obscure framework to unblock their team
- Debug a production issue at 2 a.m. if it matters

But they won't:

- Spend 8 hours building an app for a company they've never met
- Grind through contrived leetcode problems from 2009
- Navigate a 6-round process with zero feedback or clarity

Why? Because good developers are ruthless about how they invest their time. And they've seen enough broken hiring funnels to know when it's not worth it.

What “Dumb” Hiring Funnels Look Like

Here's a peek at the hiring gauntlets you might be running—and why they don't work.

✗ The 6-Hour Take-Home With No Guidance

You give them a vague prompt and expect a polished app with:

- CI/CD
- Tests

Because good developers are ruthless about how they invest their time.

- Responsive design
- Bonus points for “delight”

And you wonder why 70% of candidates drop out before submission.

✗ The Blind HackerRank Screen

Your initial screen is a black-box test with irrelevant algorithms, timed to the second, and reviewed by... no one?

You don't even give feedback. You're not filtering for problem-solvers. You're filtering for people who are okay being treated like bots.

✗ The 5-Round Interview Maze

Your loop includes:

- Recruiter screen
- Hiring manager chat
- Live coding
- Take-home project
- Technical deep dive
- Culture interview

And sometimes a follow-up just for good measure.

This isn't “thorough.” It's hostile. Especially for senior engineers who've been through this 10+ times.

✗ The “Prove You Want It” Mentality

“If they really want to work here, they'll put in the effort.”

No, they won't. They'll go to the company that respects their time. And they'll tell their network not to bother applying to yours.

Who Are You Actually Filtering Out?

Your funnel isn't filtering for the best—it's filtering for:

- People who don't have a full-time job right now
- People who have the privilege to spend nights and weekends on unpaid work
- People who are good at test-taking, not real-world coding
- People who are desperate enough to put up with it

Meanwhile, the engineers you actually want? They're walking away silently and never looking back.

Who Are You Actually Filtering Out?

You don't need to lower your standards. You need to raise your game.

Here's how.

✓ 1. Keep the Bar High. Shorten the Path.

Great engineers want to be challenged—but they also want to move quickly.

Design a process that:

- Takes no more than 1–2 weeks
- Involves no more than 3–4 steps
- Gives quick, clear feedback at every stage

Fast ≠ sloppy. It just means you value their time as much as your own.

✓ 2. Replace Take-Homes With Working Sessions

Take-home projects are a black hole. Try collaborative sessions where:

- A real-world problem is discussed
- The candidate codes with someone from your team
- You evaluate not just what they build, but how they think and communicate

This gives you more signal in less time—and shows them what working with your team might actually feel like.

✓ 3. Be Clear, Not Clever

Explain your process up front. Set expectations. Be honest about:

- What you're evaluating
- What kind of work they'll do here
- What happens next (and when)

Transparency builds trust. Trust builds engagement.

✓ 4. Tailor the Funnel to the Role

You don't need the same loop for a junior frontend dev as for a staff-level platform engineer.

Build modular interview kits:

- Technical eval → real-world system design for seniors
- Pairing or async code review for mids
- Portfolio deep dives or mentorship aptitude for tech leads

One-size-fits-all = one-size-filters-out.



✓ 5. Give Feedback Like a Grown-Up

Even a one-line note like “we were looking for stronger async programming experience” is better than ghosting.

Feedback turns rejection into a relationship. Ghosting turns candidates into anti-ambassadors.

Real Companies Doing It Right

- **Company A** condensed their process from 5 rounds to 3. They swapped take-homes for a real code review exercise and saw their **completion rate go from 45% to 89%**.
- **Company B** started giving next-day feedback on every round. Their offer acceptance rate went up by **30%**.
- **Company C** ditched leetcode-style interviews entirely for senior hires and focused on **system walkthroughs and peer conversations**. Result?

Faster time to hire. Better technical fits. Happier teams.

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Why This Isn't Just a Hiring Problem

A bloated, lazy funnel is a preview of your engineering culture.

If you:

- Communicate poorly
- Overvalue bureaucracy
- Show no empathy for time constraints

...why would anyone believe your work culture is any better?

Your interview is your first pull request with a developer. If the signal is full of lint, they won't merge.

Developers Are Telling You the Truth—You're Just Not Listening

They're not lazy. They're selective.

They're not entitled. They're efficient.

They're not flaky. They're just done with dumb funnels.

And if you're still clinging to a 2006-era interview process with unpaid take-homes, 6 rounds of hoops, and ghost-town feedback loops—guess what?

Your best candidates aren't declining your offers.

They're never even finishing your funnel.

Ready to Fix Your Broken Hiring Funnel?

At Carson Harris Associates, we help engineering orgs design high-signal, low-friction hiring processes that respect developers—and close the ones you actually want.

If your top candidates are dropping off before the finish line, we can help you figure out why.

We specialize in connecting companies with top-tier software engineering talent—fast. From backend architects and DevOps pros to product-focused full-stack engineers, we understand what it takes to deliver real business value, not just code.

If you're stuck chasing unicorns while your roadmap burns, it's time to change tack. I help teams hire real engineers—fast, skilled, and actually available. Let's talk before your competitors ship what you're still interviewing for.

Don't let perfectionism stall your progress. Partner with a firm that knows how to deliver.

☞ **Let's talk.**

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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.

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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