

The Hidden Gap Between Great Talent and Great Companies



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Over the past few months, I've had versions of the same conversation from two different sides. A company saying, "We just can't find the right person." And, separately, exactly the kind of person they're looking for. They never meet.

A QA and RA Director at a smaller company had been searching for a software QE for about four months. Most applicants were general software testers, capable of testing software in isolation but without experience testing it on the actual product to see how it operated there. That distinction mattered for what her team needed to accomplish.

At the same time, I was talking with a very experienced senior software QE who had done exactly that kind of work. They were ready to move, but too busy to scroll job postings and wanted opportunities brought to them. When I described this person to the Director, she said that was exactly who she'd been looking for. Then came the catch: the company didn't want to use an outside recruiter, and there was no budget for a fee. She'd already spent significant time reviewing applicants with no fit to show for it, while the projects sat stalled and her consultant's limited availability kept things from moving. The search itself had become a part time job she didn't want and didn't have time for. As far as I know, the role never got filled, and the senior QE never heard about it.

Good RA and QA people are out there. So are good roles. They keep missing each other because searches often stay limited to one channel, run by leaders already stretched thin. There's a second cost to this that rarely gets discussed: candidates who see the same posting month after month start to wonder if something's

wrong with the company, or whether it's a ghost job. Over time, they stop taking those roles seriously, which makes the next hire even harder.

None of this means abandoning your own efforts. Internal postings, HR outreach, and referrals can all keep running in parallel. The real question is what it's costing you not to add one more resource to the mix, in the time spent on applicants who were never a fit, the money tied up in stalled projects and consultant hours, and the weeks or months a leader spends managing a search that isn't working. If I don't find you the right person, there's nothing to pay. If I do, the fee is worth it because the role gets filled, the work starts moving again, and the time and money that were leaking into a stalled search go back into the work your team was hired to do.