



Bridging The Technical Skills Gap

technology employees pandemic

Summary: COVID-19 and the rush to work remotely revealed to many institutions their technological weaknesses and skills gap. How you can bridge the gap.

Did you hear that a buried treasure worth millions was actually found in the Rocky Mountains? We didn't think things like that happened. While the latest technology is not exactly buried, it is a treasure that many bankers realize they need more than ever.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has expedited the banking industry's reliance on and utilization of a multitude of technologies -- from security measures to amplified digital banking capabilities. In a matter of days, community financial institutions (CFIs) had to equip employees to work from home securely, and satisfy a surge in digital banking demand. This confluence of factors revealed to many institutions their weaknesses when it comes to technological capabilities and the technological expertise of their employees.

According to Digital Banking Report and OpenText research in April and May, 72% of banking executives have identified a moderate or significant skills gap within their organizations, including soft, technical and digital skills. Yet, though many banks managed to overcome the initial challenges of equipping remote-working employees and serving customers remotely, only 3% of bank executives believe their banks have made any notable progress in closing the talent gap within their organizations. Meanwhile, another 75% of bank executives believe their organizations have made minimal progress, or no progress at all, in enhancing their digital or technical needs. So what can CFIs do to address this imbalance?

Assess internal skills. First and foremost, you will need to identify both the technical skills you are currently lacking and the skills you are likely to need amidst an increasing reliance on digital banking capabilities. Think big here.

Determine the technical skills needed. According to a recent survey of chief information officers and technology leaders at major corporations by NPower, almost 70% of respondents believe businesses will increase their upskilling and training budget to allow for new IT skills. While much of this falls on your IT team, your non-IT employees need to be tech-savvy enough to help support customers with their evolving digital needs.

Bridging the skills gap. Once you have figured out your institution's new requirements, you can determine how to address them. If bringing on new employees is the answer, you will need to quickly start to recruit. Other businesses across the spectrum will likely need to fill their technology gaps too. That means that CFIs will be competing with a multitude of industries and organizations for qualified employees. For some tips, see our article, [Virtual College Recruiting During The Pandemic](#).

Internal training is also an option. According to the same digital banking report, 47% of bank executives intend to address their tech gaps through re-skilling and internal training. In the short run, this could be a more cost-effective option.

Whatever your method to address the skills gap, you should start now. There is no going back, so be prepared to move forward.

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