

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

How Guidewire Maximizes Candidate Quality and Reduces Time to Hire for Its Global Workforce





Denise Airlie

Director, Talent Acquisition
EMEA

Denise joined Guidewire in November 2012 as a Recruitment Business Partner and is now the Director of Talent Acquisition for the EMEA region. Her day-to-day tasks include supervising recruiting teams that support 10 departments in the region, overseeing core branding projects, and managing talent operations. With a bigger picture focus on introducing best practices to global hiring, Denise led the initiative to replace existing candidate assessment processes.



Ray Rishty

Staff Software Engineer

Ray has been a software engineer at Guidewire since December 2014. While his primary role is to develop products in the data organization, his experience with Guidewire has made him an integral part of hiring processes. As the company grows, Ray continues to assess what the hiring process looks like, which questions will best reveal the capabilities of candidates, and how to identify the best people for open tech roles.



Ian Doyle

Consulting Manager

Ian was hired as a Senior Solution Consultant when the Dublin-based Guidewire Services Center (GSC) opened in 2012. Now, as the Consulting Manager for GSC, Ian is heavily involved in running and assessing interview processes. Especially as the GSC focuses on high-volume hiring for recent graduates, Ian must find ways to automate processes, ensure technical assessments are fair and effective, and make sure the professional services teams are making the most of hiring technology.

“When faced with any trade-off or decision, we make that decision based on what’s best for our customers. Thinking that way at every level of the company creates the customer-first culture that serves Guidewire and our stakeholders most effectively.”

Mike Rosenbaum
CEO of Guidewire

About Guidewire


Guidewire combines digital, core, analytics, and AI to deliver its P&C platform as a cloud service. And with the largest R&D team, services team, and partner ecosystem in the insurance software industry, Guidewire is continually evolving to meet customer needs.

Guidewire by the numbers:

 **380+**
customers

 in **34**
countries

 **1,000+**
implementations

 **100%**
focus on serving P&C

 **800+**
consultants and
10,000+
partner experts

 **700+**
person R&D team largest in industry
75+
marketplace partners

The Challenges of Assessing Top Tech Talent Globally and at Scale

One thing that Guidewire excels at is adapting to new market demands and innovative technology trends. Founded in 2001, the company was built on the idea that outdated mainframe systems and paper-based processes were leading to economic losses for P&C insurers—and that a software solution could increase both productivity and financial gain.

While that idea holds true today, the software suite that Guidewire offers has continuously evolved. The effectiveness and efficiency of that evolution has a lot to do with the company's engineering culture.

“At our core, we're a product organization,” says Rishty. “Under the director level across our different product development departments, we have smaller teams called pods that consist of about 6 people. Within those pods, every engineer plays a role in the design and decision-making processes. Even though it's a larger organization, we try to keep the structure and culture as flat as possible, which helps us adapt to challenges more effectively.”

But even though the internal engineering structure is built for efficiency, hiring processes weren't set up for success as Guidewire adapted to digital demands. With so many new roles to hire for across Guidewire's global offices, there was a need for more efficient and scalable candidate assessment solutions.

“For a long time, there was a manual test that our hiring teams used to assess candidates for new roles,” says Airlie. “It took a week or so just to get through the code test. Because it took hours to complete, candidates could only do it on weekends. And then our hiring managers had to find time to review the results. We had such a high drop-off rate at the time because other companies could hire so much faster.”

In addition to the sheer amount of time the testing process took, the technical assessment was heavily copied online, making it easy for candidates to look at answers while completing the take-home test. While the company had a robust interview process following the technical assessment that filtered out those who cheated, there was a clear need for change.

“The last thing we want to do is waste time for engineering teams by having them interview the wrong people,” says Airlie. “To make sure engineers could focus their time on product development, we had to improve the quality of our candidate pipeline and implement new solutions and processes to reduce time to hire. An engineering manager I once worked with recommended Codility and we decided to implement the platform.”

Lessons Learned from Rolling Out a New Solution

01

Having tried and tested, validated technical problems to build assessments out of significantly reduces the time it takes to move candidates to the next stage of hiring.

03

Automating so much of the assessment process makes it easier to find outliers in the candidate pool that turn out to be excellent hires.

02

Implementing a robust platform for technical hiring comes with the flexibility to conduct remote interviews, making it easy to adapt when external forces threaten to derail operations.

04

Giving candidates an easy-to-use platform for technical assessments significantly increases the likelihood that they'll complete the assessment and leads to a better overall experience.



What Changed After Implementing Codility?

Immediate increases in productivity and scalability

The variety of technical and engineering roles at Guidewire has exploded in recent years. With a need to hire for everything from graduate-level positions to senior product development roles, Guidewire needed Codility to immediately improve productivity for technical hiring teams. CodeCheck technical assessments delivered on expectations and scaled seamlessly across hiring teams.

“We recently had over 4,000 applicants for our graduate program,” says Doyle. “Codility helps us scale candidate assessment at a level that wouldn’t be possible with manual review processes. We sent out nearly 800 tests automatically. And even though we did some manual review of the results, our teams are mostly able to focus their time on the next steps of hiring. The new processes have scaled so well that we’ve rolled out Codility in 5 offices around the world across both engineering and professional services.”

Seamless transition to remote hiring

Guidewire, like all companies, had to completely change its approach to hiring due

to the 2020 global health crisis. For a company that relied so heavily on whiteboarding sessions during onsite interviews, it seemed like a shift to remote hiring would be impossible. But with CodeLive, the team was able to pivot in just 24 hours and keep up its hiring pace heading into Summer 2020.

“CodeLive has become a cornerstone of our final round interviews,” says Doyle. “Our tech hiring is incredibly focused on whiteboarding. The process helps us drill into a candidate’s mindset. We need to understand how they solve problems, not just that they have coding skills. Having CodeLive didn’t just make it easy for us to transition to remote hiring—it gives our hiring managers confidence that they can assess a candidate’s ability to collaborate without meeting them in person.”



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Ability to uncover the best possible candidates

A technical assessment isn't the only factor in hiring engineers. While coding skills are important, there are soft skills that can make someone who scores lower on an assessment worth hiring—especially when you're building up a pipeline with graduate candidates.

“There was one candidate who was a borderline candidate to move on to our second round in the hiring process,” says Doyle. “She hit the exact cutoff on our CodeCheck assessment, so if she scored 1% less we never would have spoken to her. But she was amazing in the face-to-face interview and has been one of our best hires in the last 12 months. The unbiased grading of CodeCheck helps us uncover these outliers who we'd otherwise miss out on with a strict, manual technical test.”



What's Next for Hiring at Guidewire?

One thing that will define Guidewire hiring processes in the coming months and years is a push for greater diversity. While Guidewire is ahead of industry averages when it comes to workplace diversity and inclusion, it's clear that all tech companies need to do more.

“We’ve started to implement certain AI-powered solutions to add new levels of diversity inclusion to every aspect of our hiring processes,” says Airlie. “One of the most important things we can do is to ensure there’s diversity of thought in our hiring teams. This needs to be driven by internal initiatives, but we’re excited to see what Codility is doing to bring anonymity to the technical assessment process. By eliminating unconscious bias from early stages of the hiring process, we can set ourselves up to continue improving the diversity of our organization.”



You'll find more guides, case studies,
and datasheets to help you refactor
your tech recruiting on the resources
section of our website

Codility.com