



INDUSTRY: **E-COMMERCE**

# ACHIEVING A **40% FEMALE** TECH WORKFORCE BY 2023

## **ABOUT THE COMPANY:**

**Zalando** is Europe's leading online platform for fashion and lifestyle. Founded in Berlin in 2008, the company brings fashion to more than 35 million active customers in 17 markets.



# THE CHALLENGE



## YASAR AHMAD

Global Head of Tech  
Talent Acquisition



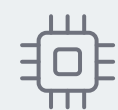
In their latest [Diversity & Inclusion Report](#), Zalando highlights gender diversity in tech teams as a particularly important challenge. Women currently make up only 17% percent of the tech workforce at Zalando so the company sets the goal to increase the number to 40% by 2023.

As a Global Head of Tech Talent Acquisition, Yasar Ahmad was given the task to build an inclusive recruitment process that would neither compromise the quality of candidates, nor the candidate experience.

But advancing gender diversity and hiring engineers from underrepresented groups seem to be even more difficult in the wake of the global economic crisis. Since COVID, Zalando experienced a surge in candidate applications which takes hours of a recruiters' work. Yasar needed to automate the process for better efficiency, making sure that all candidates are judged fairly and in an unbiased way.

“Gender diversity is a massive priority for Zalando. This problem represents half of the population of the world.”

### CURRENT CHALLENGES:



Women make up only **17%** of the tech workforce



Need effective ways to **eliminate bias**



Increased number of **applications** since COVID



Lack of automated **recruitment** processes



# THE IMPLEMENTATION

In order to build an inclusive environment, Zalando focused on creating a standardized, equal, and unbiased recruitment process. “How we treat our candidates is just the same as how we treat our employees: with respect, in a timely and inclusive manner,” says Yasar. Codility allows them to remove unconscious bias without compromising the quality of candidates and the efficiency of the team.

“We looked at Codility to help us battle unconscious bias by assessing all the candidates equally and fairly.”

First, the candidates receive a take-home assessment to showcase their technical and problem-solving skills. Since 2016, the company sent over 26,000 [CodeCheck](#) tests that help them identify top candidates quickly and fairly.

Since COVID, Zalando conducts remote interviews with the top candidates in a shared, live, coding environment using [CodeLive](#). The candidates and the interviewers can dig deeper into proposed solutions by drawing diagrams, frameworks, and tables - all that from the comfort of their home offices. So far, Zalando conducted over 6,000 remote interviews using Codility, while maintaining a natural and seamless candidate experience.





# THE RESULTS

Even though Zalando has ambitious diversity goals ahead, implementing Codility has already allowed Yasar to build a more inclusive environment. “Codility assessments allow our candidates to display their skills and showcase if they are experts in a certain language or technology. This is a natural coding environment for every engineer, a space where they can shine, regardless of their background,” says Yasar. By screening real-life technical

skills, Zalando ensures true talent rises to the top, regardless of background.

But hiring thousands of engineers with diverse backgrounds takes a lot of people and time to make the right decisions. And with the surge of applications after COVID, Zalando wanted to keep their processes quick and efficient. “With Codility we’re getting the right quality of candidates, engaging with those who have the

right skill set and who are genuinely interested in Zalando,” says Yasar. “They also feel we’ve invested into getting to know them better, understanding their knowledge and passion for certain languages and technologies,” he adds.

Most importantly, by reducing interactions with unqualified candidates, the team managed to save the time recruiters spend on screening candidate profiles.

“Zalando becomes more inclusive with our tech assessments, as we no longer judge individuals by just their CVs. Their technical skills plus their values and desire for fashion tech is what matters.”



Assessed **26,000** candidates with Codility, mitigating unconscious bias



Conducted **6,000** remote interviews with CodeLive



Increased the **quality** of the candidate pool



Saved **time** on screening thousands of applications every year



Built a more **inclusive** workplace