5 Keys to Creating Ads for Developers

A How-to Guide for Employer Branding Teams

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Introduction

Your company offers an incredible opportunity for software developers to grow their careers, and your job is to showcase it. But programmers can be a challenging and unique audience to reach. If you're not careful in your approach to ad copy and design, you'll likely be disappointed in the outcomes of your developer employer branding campaigns.

So what are the subtle differences between compelling developer content and tactics that fall flat? How is growing awareness of your employer brand unique to developers? What do you need to do to grab a programmer's attention? The answers to all of those questions are much more straightforward than you might have thought, and we created this guide to help answer them for you.

Here are five keys to creating online ads that resonate with developers.

1.

Speak their language

Whatever you do, do not use buzzwords or marketing fluff. In many cases, just calling out the specific value (Employee Value Proposition, EVP) your company can offer developers is incredibly powerful.

For example, if you offer opportunities to learn new languages across tech stacks, mention "Rust" or "Python" specifically in your copy. When there's a correlation between ad copy and your target audience, you can expect much stronger campaign performance.

✓ **Good Example**
"ChoiceEmployer: Join a team where you can use Rust today and learn Python tomorrow, all on AWS."

✗ **Bad Example**
"Bring your rockstar coding skills and join our team of talented developers who get to use multiple languages across tech stacks everyday!"

2.

Be honest and authentic

Developers often feel misled by dishonest employer branding campaigns. In some cases, companies promise much more value upfront to candidates than they can actually provide employees.

In others, they can't find any details on what it's like to be a developer at an organization before applying to a position. To get their attention, be as sincere as possible in your ad copy—and outline all of the info on your landing page.

✓ **Good Example**
"Build a future with flexibility. Read More About Us."

✗ **Bad Example**
"Want to build a better future? Our company offers lots of flexibility to work wherever and whenever you want!"

3.

Include clear and focused calls-to-action

Developers are drawn to ads that have a purpose beyond converting clicks to your career site. When developers look at online employer branding ads, they want to know exactly where it will take them, what they'll learn, and what's in it for them before they click.

Use this formula to get started: Relevant question + short sentence about your company + a call-to-action.

✓ **Good Example**
"Tired of being on-call? Not here, we have a dedicated site reliability team for our developers. Join Us."

⊗ **Bad Example**
"Still have to be on-call for your job? You don't have to anymore. We have a site reliability team for that."
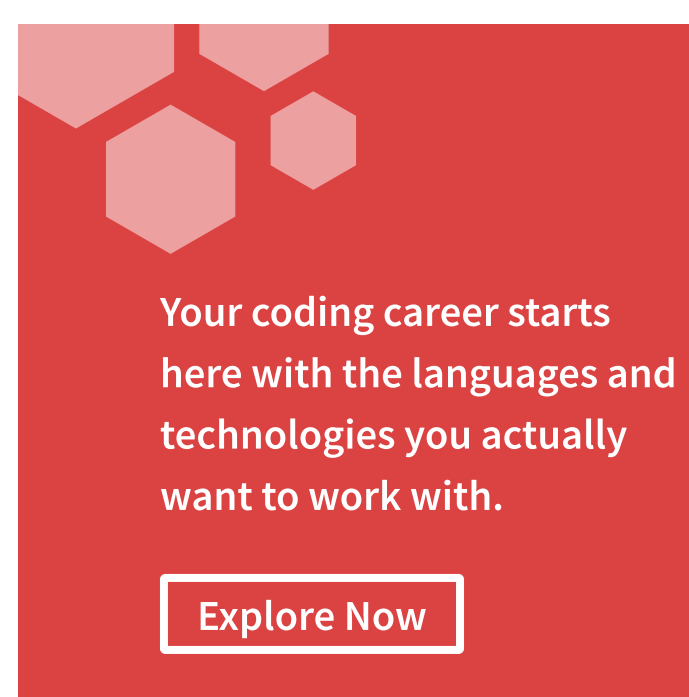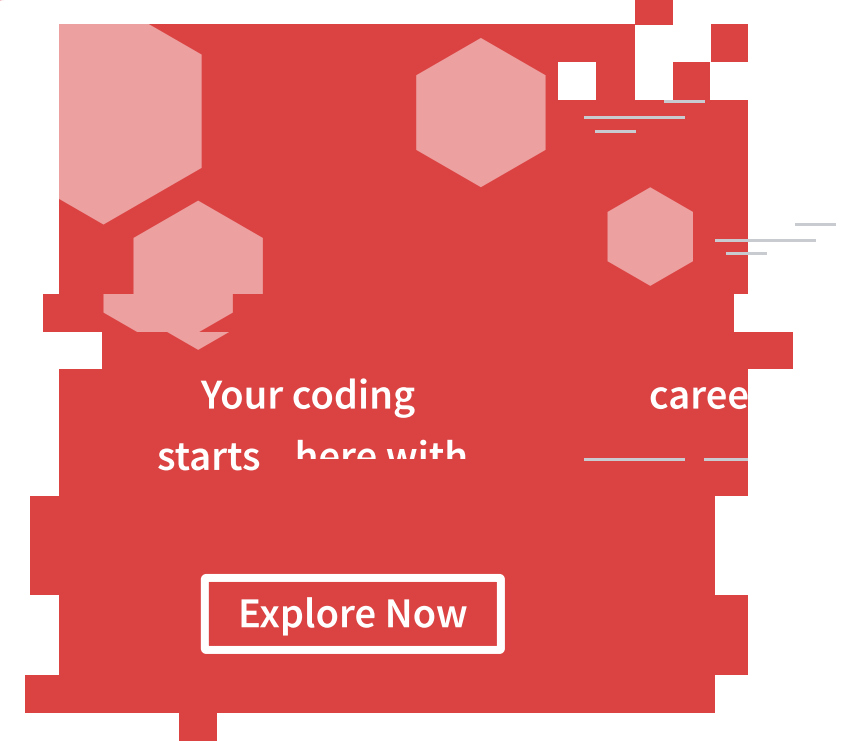
4.

Stick to static

Fancy animations and GIFs might be tempting, but developers find them annoying and distracting. Even when the copy is right on the money, developers are likely to ignore ads that make it more difficult for them to do their jobs.

✓ **Good Example**

Your coding career starts here with the languages and technologies you actually want to work with.

Explore Now

⊗ **Bad Example**

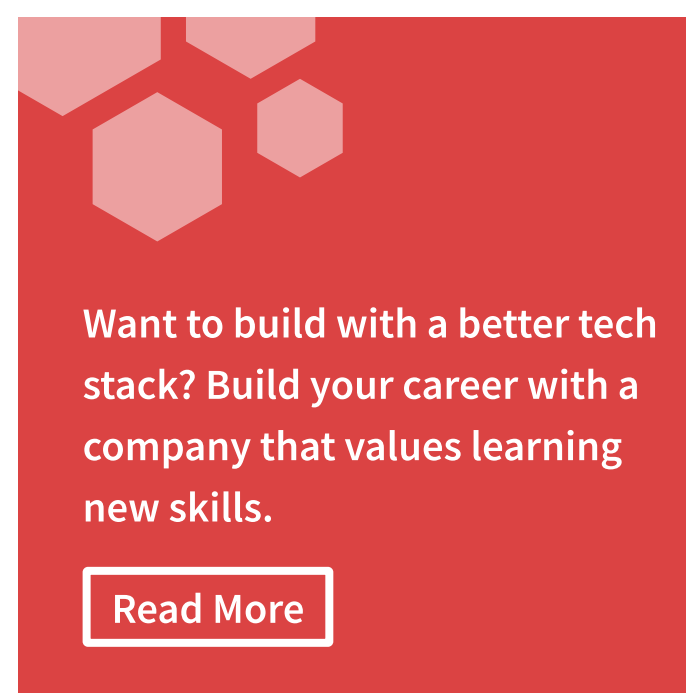Your coding starts here with caree

Explore Now

5.

Make ads easy to read

Before you finalize your employer branding ad creatives, take a few steps back from your computer and look at your ads again. Are they clear, and do they make you want to learn more? If the answer to either question is a resounding "no," go back to the drawing board.
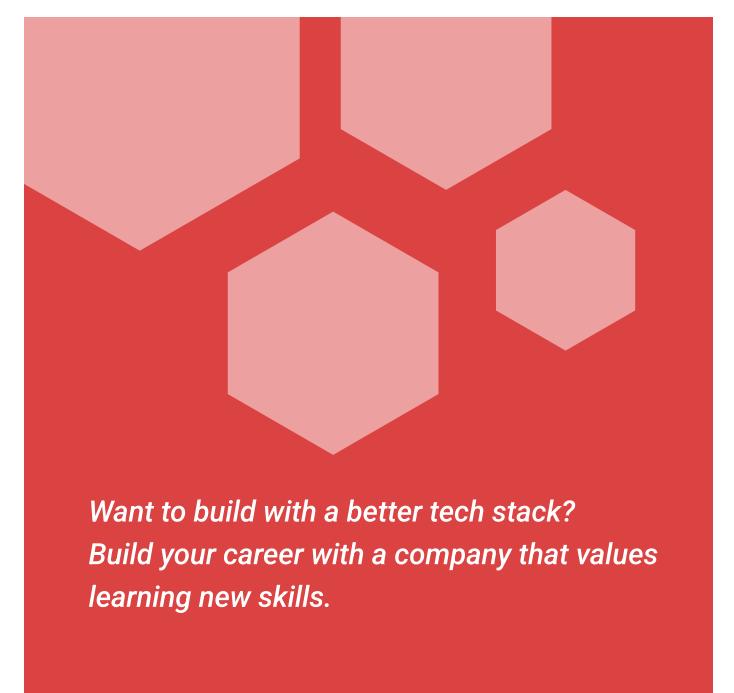
Developers consume information online much faster than the average user, so you need to ensure that your ads grab their attention when they appear on their screens.

Good Example

Want to build with a better tech stack? Build your career with a company that values learning new skills.

Read More

Bad Example

Want to build with a better tech stack? Build your career with a company that values learning new skills.

Conclusion

Creating employer branding campaigns geared to developers is a unique challenge. In many ways, it requires you to shift away from some of the best practices that you're used to. But if you stick to traditional tactics, you won't be able to reach and engage with technical candidates.

The good news is that you don't need to do anything too drastic to reach your developer employer branding goals. Developers want companies to be authentic and use simple ads that convey your employee value proposition (EVP). You don't have to do anything over-the-top to impress them or convince them why they should join your organization.

You'll probably make some mistakes along the way—and that's okay. When you do, refer back to this guide for the inspiration you need to create employer branding ad campaigns that get developers' attention for all the right reasons.

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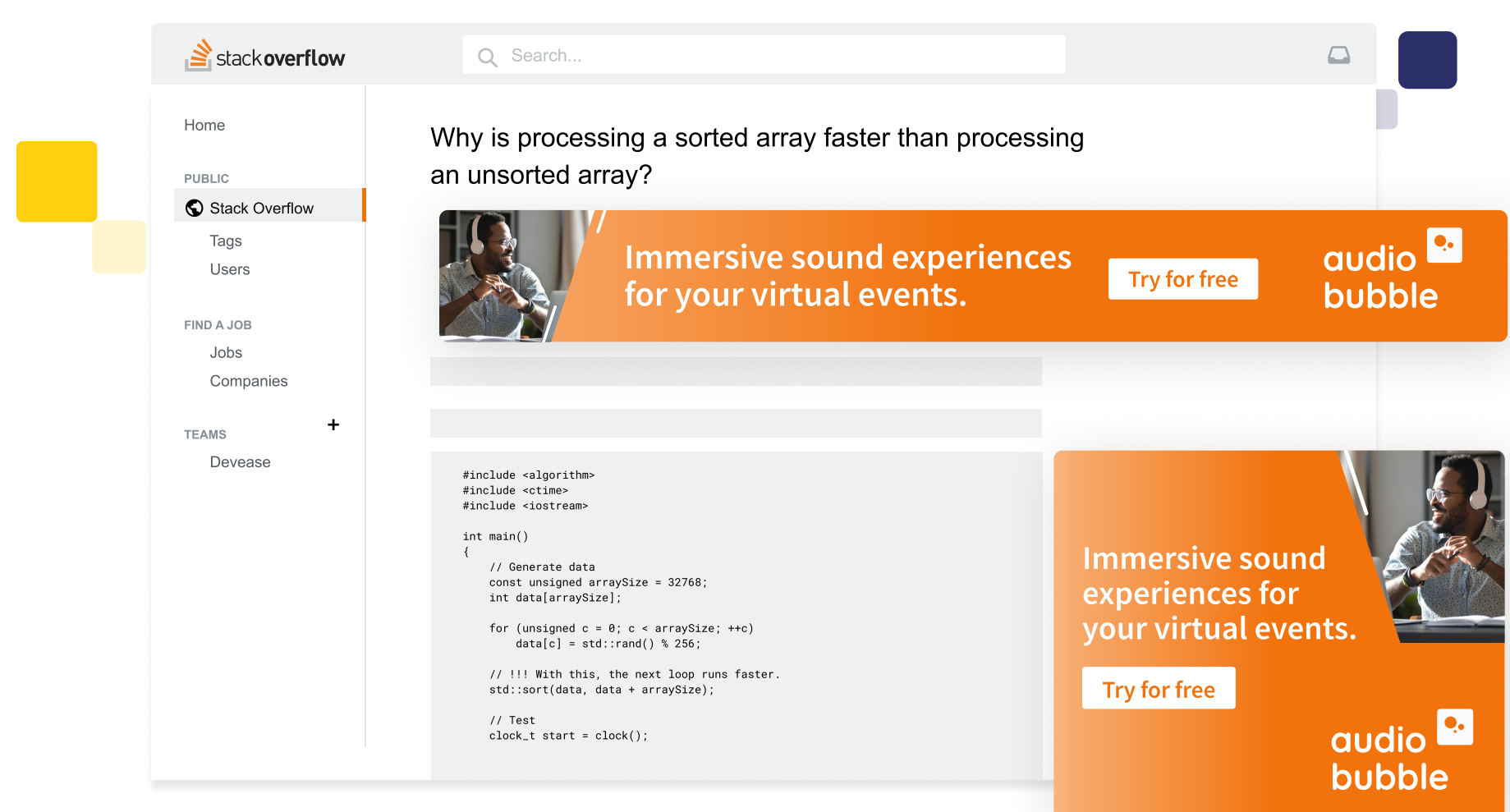
Stack Overflow Employer Branding enables you to engage and market your employer brand to 100+ million self-motivated, proactive, passionate developers and technologists.

Find out how we can build a strategy that supports your tech talent recruiting and retention goals.

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