European Software Skills Alliance.

Case Study
Cultivating employees' skills and attracting young ICT talents

Presented by: Zemanta (an Outbrain company)
Industry: Computer and information science
Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia
Size: <250 employees

Challenges:

- Students and young professionals lack data science and machine learning related skills
- Young talents are hard to attract
- Keep employees' skillsets up to date

Solution:

Zemanta regularly updates the knowledge, competences, and skills of its employees. The **company supports the employees' career objectives** by offering challenging projects, working in a close-knit team, and fostering continuous professional development.

Actively sharing knowledge and experience is one of the key objectives of **the company who also sponsors a data science Masters programme** at the University of Ljubljana and organises the "Data Science Summer School" where its employees take part as lecturers and mentors.

Zemanta invites a selected group of **young professionals and students** to take part in the summer school. The **practice-oriented training** lasts for one week, during which participants get to experiment, learn, and brainstorm about how to apply data science and machine learning.

The programme is delivered by the company's expert data scientists and external lecturers which requires office work schedule adjustments to

accommodate everyone. The participants are given **real-world problems** related to the company's challenges in the advertising technology industry and can socialise and build their soft skills at the social and networking activities.

At the end of the week, the company evaluates the overall satisfaction of participants and contributors and potentially creates new collaboration opportunities for the participating young talents.

Results:

Since its launch in 2018, the **Data Science Summer School** has attracted more than **90 applicants.**

Zemanta has trained **35 young professionals and students**, among which **two have joined their team** as full-time employees.

Key benefits:

- The short, focused programme offers participants real-world, concrete problems to solve
- Companies can detect young talents and hire them
- The programme can be replicated in an online format to get international participants or transfer knowledge to other companies
- A multi-disciplinary or cross-sectoral approach can be applied to define broader challenges

Key resources:

- Companies need to rearrange the work so their employees can take an active part in the programme
- A one-week programme implies limits to what real-world problems the company can propose and how accurately they can assess the participants' skillsets
- To run such a programme, companies must ensure that there is a large pool of interested potential applicants to balance out the relative organisational, logistical, and human resources costs induced

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