



CAREERS MENTORING PROGRAMME CASE STUDY

Usman Qaiyum, Talent Acquisition Partner at CloudFactory

Usman Qaiyum is Talent Acquisition Partner at CloudFactory, a firm that helps organisations advance their AI and machine learning, predominantly through data annotation and labelling.

Usman sees A LOT of CVs in his role and he speaks to a lot of candidates for a variety of jobs. He is advising his group on career paths and how to make themselves stand out in applications by using their UTC education to their advantage.

“Some of the students I’ve spoken to at UTC have a much better understanding of tech than people I’ve spoken to from other schools. They should let that serve them by letting potential employers know they are focused on these kind of careers - already proved that by choosing to study at this type of school.”

What makes a good mentor?

I think the ability to listen and understand the person you’re talking to. You can’t give people advice unless you understand them, their aspirations or their interests. You can be speaking to two people who want to do exactly the same thing, but the path to get there may be different for each one. So I’ve been getting to know my group and letting them get to know me so they feel comfortable opening up.

Why are you a good mentor?

I’ve got over 15 years of experience in recruitment, and I’ve covered quite a lot in that time, with different job roles within different industries. So I’ve got a good

understanding of the range of roles out there in the working world.

But I’m not there to tell them what I think they should be doing. I’m trying to impart my knowledge and let them know what I’ve seen out there, so they’re able to make those best decisions for themselves.

What have you been doing in your recent sessions with your group?

We’ve been looking at what to put on their CVs. They don’t have a lot of experience yet but the main rules are there - make sure it’s clear and presentable. And highlight that which makes you different - what is it that you’re interested in, what hobbies or clubs do you do, and what does that show about your personality? Everyone brings in their own toolkit of skills to a job, so you need to present your honest, genuine self.

What do you want your mentees to come away knowing?

I’m hoping to open their eyes a little to the world of work for when they finish school. They’ll all end up in different places but there are certain skills which will serve them well whatever they go into.

Also to not be afraid to ask for help as it is how you expand your knowledge and broaden your skill set. I’d say get advice from whoever is able to give you that.

Did you have a mentor?

Not specifically, but every manager I have, I treat them as a mentor.