

Deep Tech recruiting in Switzerland

A virtual roundtable discussion with
Rockstar Recruiting, the Canton of Zurich,
and Google Cloud.

Hosted by

**GREATER
ZURICH
AREA**

rockstar*
RECRUITING



**Canton of Zurich
Department for Economic Affairs
Office for Economy and Labour**

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The Greater Zurich Area



Our agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Why Switzerland? - many good reasons!**
- **Choosing Zurich - understanding the regulatory/labor law**
- **Recruiting for Web3 & AI**
- **Lessons Learned: Case Study DFINITY**
- **Executive Hiring - a singular market**
- **Q&A**

Our panelists



Jillian Ochs
Director West Coast
Greater Zurich Area Ltd

jillian.ochs@greaterzuricharea.com



Klaus Fuchs
Co-Founder,
Rockstar Recruiting
(www.rockstar.jobs)

kf@rockstar.jobs



Leonard Collon
EMEA Executive Recruiter
Google Cloud

collon@google.com



Matthias Inauen
Director
New Business Units,
Canton of Zurich

matthias.inauen@vd.zh.ch



Brandon Cohen
Director of Talent
DFINITY Foundation

brandon.cohen@dfinity.org

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Why Switzerland?

Many good reasons



Switzerland: a unique country in Europe

- **Stability**

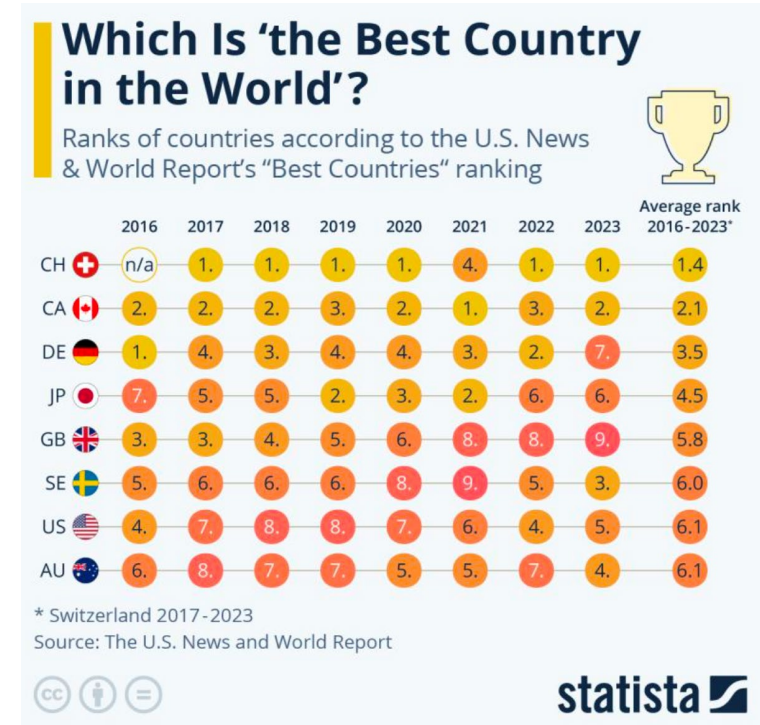
- Neutrality has helped the country avoid conflicts.
- A liberal economy contributes to an average growth of the national economy (on average +5% every year on average since 1948) which is business- and tax-friendly.

- **A very educated workforce and top universities**

- 89% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education, higher than the OECD average of 79% and we count 12 universities & 9 universities of applied sciences.
- ETH & EPFL two prestigious technical universities are part of the best in Europe and worldwide.

- **Quality of life**

- The country consistently ranks high in international surveys of quality of life (thanks to low crime rates, clear air & water, excellent healthcare system and public services).



Switzerland: a unique country in Europe

- **Infrastructures are well developed & maintained**
 - A reliable railway system and 3 best-in class international airports
 - Roads & street are well-maintained
- **Cultural & linguistic diversity**
 - 4 national languages and English very widespread
 - 39% of the permanent resident population has migration background
- **Natural beauty**
 - With mountains, lake, parks and scenic nature, you are never far from a beautiful landscape
 - Each city has a direct access to luxurious nature & Zurich has the real mountain view!



A market with many assets

- **A very trained workforce thanks to the academic ecosystem**
 - With gold standard education divided between vocational system & university track, young Swiss are very well trained and profit from a flexible system.
 - Internationally recognized universities with EPFL in Lausanne and ETH in Zurich ranked amongst the best universities in Europe.
- **A Business friendly environment**
 - A liberal & pragmatic approach to economy with moderate corporate and individual taxation are part of our business-friendly model
- **Competing against the most attractive markets**
 - In Europe, Switzerland attracts people from neighboring countries
 - Outside Europe, we have a unique strong position from a talent market perspective



ETH & EPFL leading universities

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Choosing Zurich

What to take into account when investing

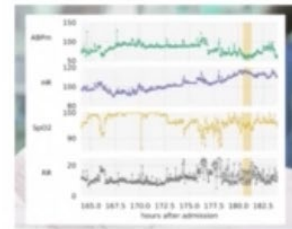


Zurich: from leading research to real-world adoption of AI

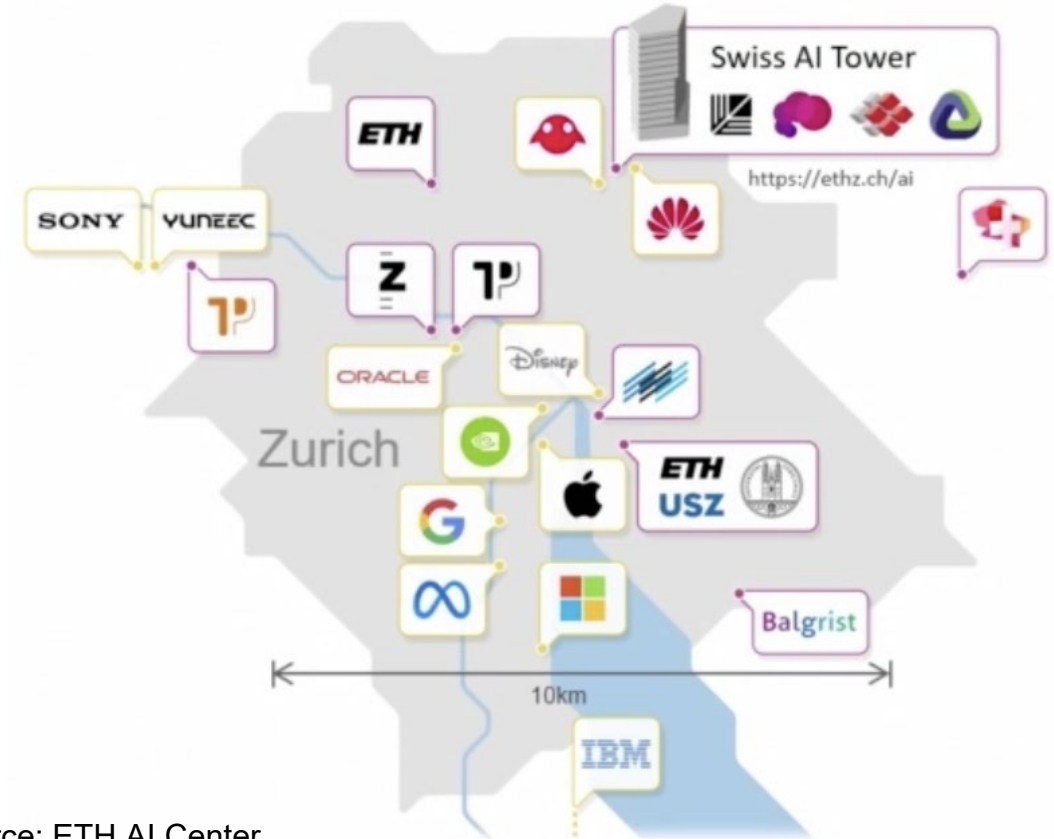
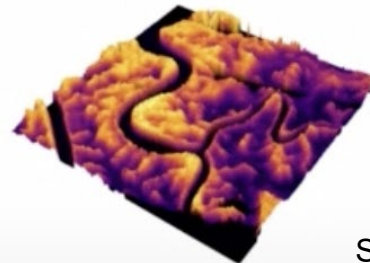
Strong position of ETH Zurich leading to Zurich becoming an AI hub

QS ranks ETH Zurich in world's top 10 for 16 subjects

International higher education think tank, QS releases its World University Rankings by Subject. Sixteen ETH Zurich disciplines place in the top 10 contributing to Switzerland's place as the third best in the world's higher education sector.
06.04.2022 by Marianne Lucien



QS World University Rankings by Subject reveal how ETH Zurich measures up in terms of its academic and employer reputation, citations, and impact. (Image: ETH Zurich / Alessandro Della Bella)

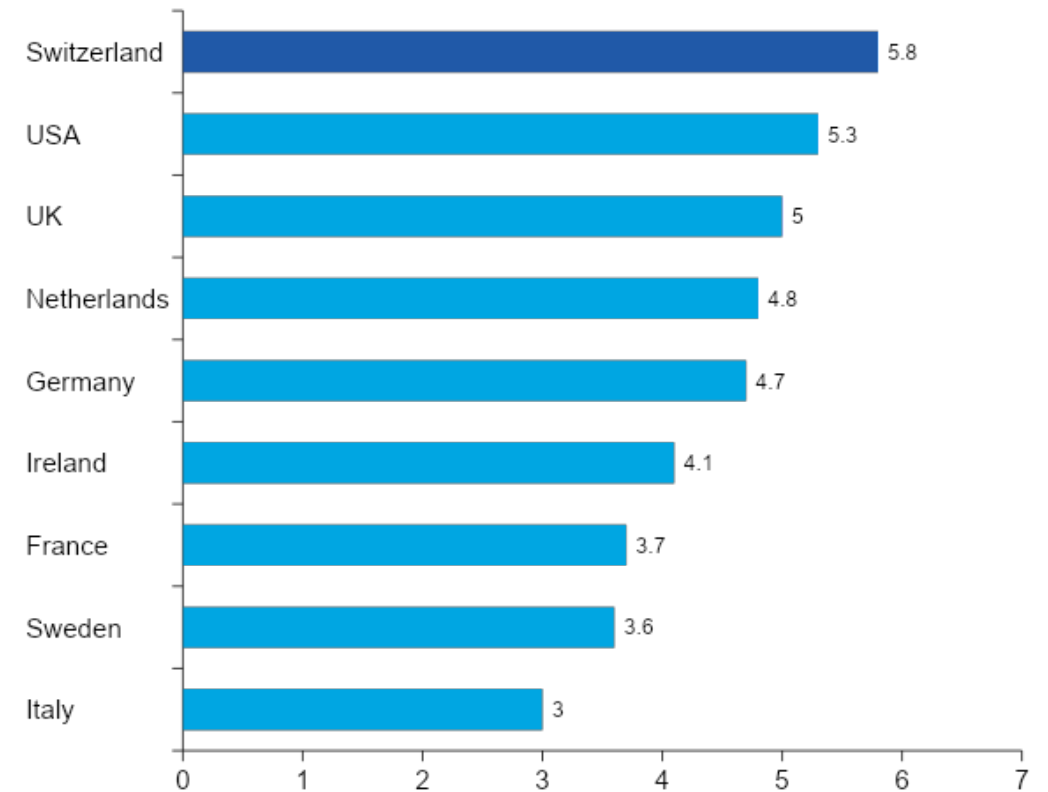


Source: ETH AI Center

Swiss Employment Law

- Very **liberal and employer-friendly** employment laws compared to other European jurisdictions
- Concept in general: **common sense approach** and high degree of **flexibility** – only few mandatory, inalterable provisions
- No employment at-will but **short minimum notice periods** (one month)
- **No mandatory severance payments**
- **«freedom to terminate»** as a signature feature of Swiss labor law
- Salaries are high, but also normal working hours of > 42h a week

Ease of Hiring and Firing



Source: World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness Report 2019

Graph shows scores of some selected countries and does not represent the complete ranking

Regulatory framework: Foreign Nationals and Integration Act

- 1) **European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nationals:**
free movement of people, no work permit is necessary
- 2) **Citizens of all other countries (non EU/EFTA nationals)** must have a work contract from an employer and the company has to apply for a work permit.

Employers must show that they made **efforts to find a EU/EFTA citizen** or any foreign national already in Switzerland with a permit to work.

All cantons/states will hand out work permits to **highly-qualified individuals** with a specific skill-set, and if a certain number of jobs will be created.

All employees can choose their canton of residency independently from their canton of employment.

How to obtain work permits for local employment

- 1) **Document your recruitment efforts** in EU/EFTA on industry specific and local job platforms, job postings at the regional public employment agency RAV and EURES
- 2) **Apply online for a work permit from the canton.** The application must be submitted by the employer.
- 3) **The application includes:**
 - **Interest of the economy as a whole** (specific reason for application, business plan, balance sheet and profit/loss account)
 - **Precedence of domestic employees** (job postings at RAV/EURES, job advertisements, list of applicants with detailed information (nationality, education/qualification, date of job application and reason for rejection)
In types of professions with a pronounced shortage of skilled labour, it can be assumed that the domestic potential has been exhausted and that, therefore, a job posting, detailed job advertisements as well as lists of candidates may be dispensed with.
 - **Salary and employment conditions** (employment contract with date and signed by both parties)
 - **Personal requirements** (educational certificates and job reference, CV, copy of passport)

The process until issuance of work permits usually takes **4-6 weeks**.

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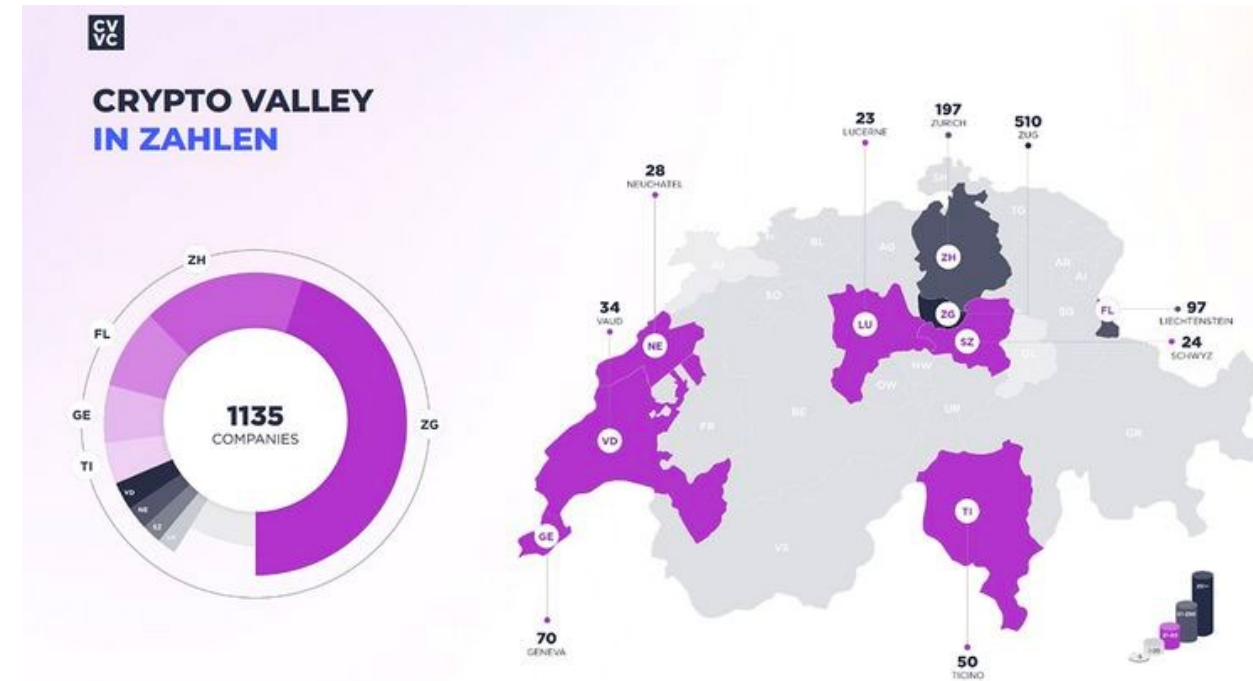
“Crypto Valley” / Web3

An innovative hub



Mapping the Crypto Valley: 1'135 Companies

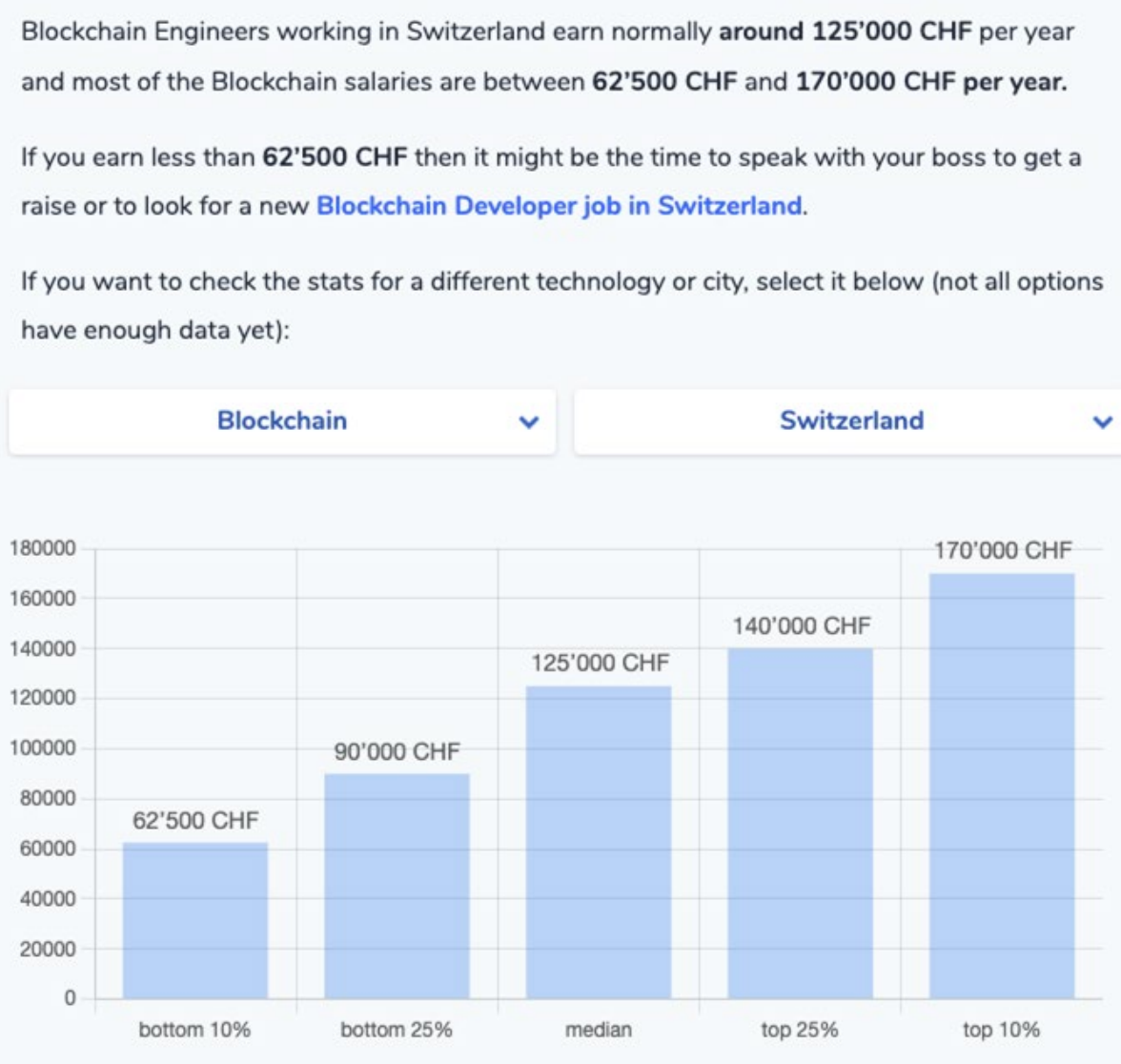
- **Crypto Valley** is the name coined for the forward-thinking region that spans from the canton and city of Zug, Switzerland to Liechtenstein.
- From its favorable tax laws, legal stability, a penchant for experimentation, the crypto community has found a natural home in the region.
- With over 1'100 prominent blockchain projects based in the Crypto Valley, this legacy of innovation will be carried on long into the future.



Source cryptovalleylabs.ch/cryptovalley

Current Blockchain Developer Salaries in Switzerland [2023]

- We at Rockstar Recruiting AG (www.rockstar.jobs) track the Swiss Deep Tech Job market across disciplines
- Average Salary is 126'500 CHF per year, while the median salary is 125'000 CHF.¹⁾
- **Swiss Blockchain tech talents are available at 26% lower gross salaries than in the SF bay area (\$190'795)²⁾**
- Examples of Blockchain companies in CH: Bitcoin Suisse, BSV, Cardano, Crypto Finance, Dfinity, Ethereum (founded 2014 in Zug), Lisk, Seba, Swissborg, Sygnum, Taurus, Tezos



Current Machine Learning Engineer Salaries in Switzerland [2023]

- We at Rockstar Recruiting AG (www.rockstar.jobs) track the Swiss Deep Tech Job market across disciplines
- Average Machine Learning Engineers in Switzerland is 124'200 CHF per year, while the median salary is 125'000 CHF.
- **Swiss ML/AI talents are available at 17% lower gross salaries than in the SF bay area (\$190'081)²⁾**
- Examples of AI/ML companies in CH: Apple, Google, Huawei, IBM, Magic Leap, Merantix, META, Microsoft, Nvidia, Oracle, Sony, Yuneec, Zurich Instruments

Machine Learning Engineers working in Switzerland earn normally around **125'000 CHF** per year and most of the ML, AI salaries are between **90'000 CHF** and **145'000 CHF** per year.

If you earn less than **90'000 CHF** then it might be the time to speak with your boss to get a raise or to look for a new [Machine Learning Engineer job in Switzerland](#).

If you want to check the stats for a different technology or city, select it below (not all options have enough data yet):



Source 1) rockstar.jobs & swissdevjobs.ch, 2) hired.com

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Deep Tech Recruitment

Best practices



Deep dive deep tech (e.g. web3, AI, crypto): Learnings from the world of deep tech recruitment

Compared to ‘traditional’ ICT positions (e.g. SAP, Java EE, ...), modern ‘deep tech’ recruitment requires different strategies for employers and candidates to meet successfully.

Hiring deep tech talents	Cost	Speed	Talent	Challenge
Founders hiring themselves	Red	Red	Green	Huge opportunity costs if founders spend their time recruiting and fundraising
HR/Talent acquisition	Red	Green	Yellow	Legacy tech stacks/employer branding often does not appeal to deep tech talents
Job boards ¹⁾	Green	Red	Yellow	Lots of irrelevant applications and unsuccessful processes
Tech recruiting agency ²⁾	Yellow	Green	Green	Costs involved (but only occur if placement and trial period is successful)

Source: 1) e.g. jobs.ch, indeed.com, swissdevjobs.ch, 2) e.g. Rockstar Recruiting AG (rockstar.jobs)

To be successful in deep tech recruitment, being present in the community is key.

We attended at least one tech event per week, as we believe in meeting candidates & companies in person. Today, we are proud to serve a community of tech talents across DACH region.

Over six years in, we conclude that companies are successful in winning candidates in deep tech when they offer:

- a modern tech stack
- learning opportunities
- strong network within community
- alliances with stakeholders
- above market compensation
- a great employer brand
- an impact, e.g. sustainability
- offer hybrid office/home office

Upcoming Events - Let's meet up!

Meet us at upcoming hackathons, meetups & conferences which we proudly sponsor, host and join in order to interact with the vibrant tech community.

Deep Tech Recruiting in Switzerland: A virtual roundtable discussion with Rockstar Recruiting, the Canton of Zurich,...

Conference

Discussing availability of talent in Europe How to recruit for Web3 and AI Pitfalls to avoid when recruiting in Europe Lessons learned growing tech teams in Switzerland Discussing labor law considerations of hiring

20.09.2023 Virtual

Learn More →

Swiss Python Summit 2023

Conference

This summit is all about the programming language you love. Discover the wide field of Python applications, hear how others use the language, and meet Swiss Pythonistas. The conference is suited for all skill levels, from early beginners to expert developers.

21.09.2023 OST Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences in Rapperswil

Learn More →

Web Zurich September 2023

Meetup

Join us for the September 2023 meetup! As usual, we will have some short talks as well as chit-chat and drinks. 18:30 ~ 19:00 Arrival time with drinks and chat 19:00 ~ 19:20 Adele Kuzmiakova - Building beautiful ML/data science apps in Streamlit <https://github.com/adelekuzmiakova> 19:20 ~ 19:40 Christian Wörz - Let's challenge an AI service 19:40 ~ 20:00 Oliver Glas - API First - its benefits in your API project 20:00 onward More drinks & chat We look forward to see you there!

22.09.2023 Impact Hub Zürich - Viadukt Viaduktstrasse 93 · Zürich, ZH

Learn More →

Bits & Pretzels 2023

24.09.2023 - 26.09.2023 Oktoberfest München

#WeTechTogether

Conference

About #wetegether. Welcome to the 5th edition of the largest conference for more diversity and inclusion in tech in Switzerland!

29.09.2023 Technopark Zurich

Learn More →

AI+X Summit 2023

Conference

Meet us at Zurich's largest AI conference with over 2'000 guests from academia, startups and industry. Our booth is I20. See you there.

13.10.2023 StageOne, Zurich

Hack'n'Lead 2023

Hackathon

Hack'n'Lead is Switzerland's first women-friendly Hackathon with 100 participants, 80% female participation ratio. Sponsored challenges ranged from Data Science to Software Development topics. Applications open from May 2 - 31. Register your interest now: <https://www.womenplusplus.ch/hackandlead>

11.11.2023 - 12.11.2023 Careum Auditorium

Learn More →

Case I: OpenAI ChatGPT Product Owner



Situation

A US fintech company wants to build a new product based on OpenAI ChatGPT

Candidate

A NLP/Machine Learning expert from Zurich

Company

US Fintech company

Job

The first publicly published OpenAI ChatGPT role in Switzerland

Success

We found three candidates that would have received offers with one of them also accepting the job.

Case II: Computer vision team lead for Canadian Startup

Situation

A Canadian computer vision startup decided to relocate to Zurich and recruit locally in Zurich

Candidate(s)

Team Lead with Fullstack background: NodeJS / Computer Vision / React Native

Company

Canadian Startup in the Computer Vision space

Job(s)

1st hire for a new team in Zurich (without an office at first, now at Technopark)

Success

Successfully hired and more roles to come

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DFINITY Foundation

A Crypto / Silicon Valley Hybrid



Crypto Valley Overview



10 Year Anniversary

- Quantity: 11,000+ registered projects registered
- Quality: Ethereum, Cardano, Near, DFINITY, Web3 Foundation, etc.

Culturally aligned to Web3 principles

- Decentralization
- Direct democracy / governance
- Banking/Finance tradition

Legal Frameworks

- More certain regulatory environment
- Stiftung/Foundation entity

DFINITY Foundation: At a glance...



Org history:

- European Founder / early Ethereum
- Silicon Valley VC \$ (a16z, polychain)
- Stiftung / Not for profit Swiss Foundation
- Now has 200+ employees, 130+ in Zurich

Tech:

- www.internetcomputer.org
- L1 + L2 Blockchain Protocol
- Public launch in May 2021
- Ambitious Research Project

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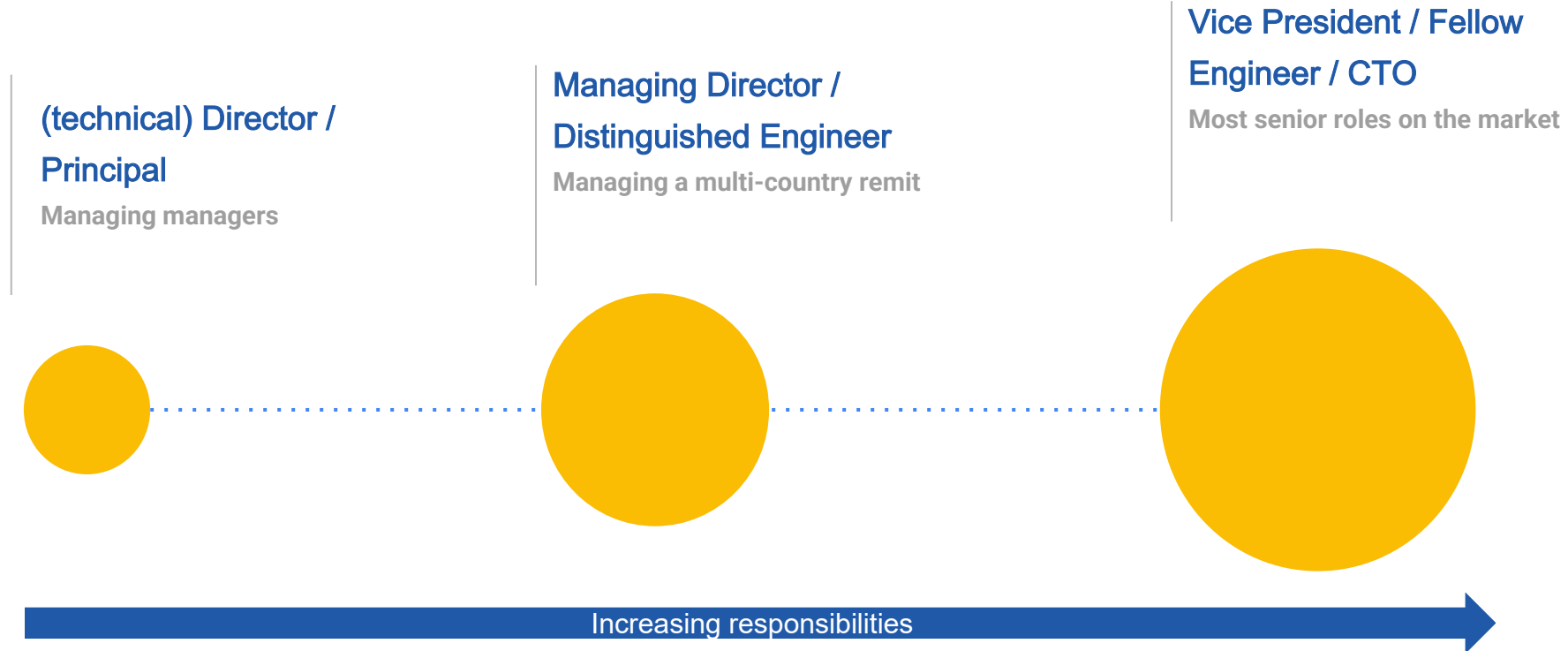
Executive Recruitment

A singular market



What about executive-level recruitment?

- Executive in a broader sense = C-level or managers of managers & above-levels
- Layers below are theoretical and depends on the size of the organisation





Nuances of executive profiles

- **Individual contributors / experts** i.e very senior people who either don't directly manage people (matrix env. Or very senior experts)
- **Technical leaders:** Technical Director or CTO, etc. leading technical team(s) and driving digital and/or technical transformation
- **Non-technical leader with technical remit** or working in technical environment
- **Non-executive Directors & Board members** advising companies
- Expanding their remits with new areas like ESG, DEI, or digital transformation or cloudification of the company.

Recruiting at the executive level

- **Candidate-driven market** with finite pool of very qualified candidates (eg. with specific technologies like Blockchain, Web3, LLM or Gen AI skills)
- **Culture and linguistic nuances play an important role**, especially for customers-facing roles where the market remains conservative
- **Building a strong employee value proposition** is helpful to attract, retain senior talents
- **Executive candidates expect flexibility**, personal & organisational development perspective and smart approach on compensation with creative package
- **Recruiting at executive level can take a few months**, depending on the desired technologies / expertise



Thank you!