CASE STUDY

Poshmark and 42 Silicon Valley

POSHMARK

42

SILICON VALLEY
Poshmark, the leading social commerce platform for the next generation of retailers and shoppers, was founded in 2011 to make shopping simple, fun and social, while also empowering entrepreneurs to build thriving retail businesses. By empowering people to sell their never worn or gently-used clothing and accessories, Poshmark allows consumers to create a revolving closet.

Headquartered in Redwood City, CA, Poshmark has a secondary office in Los Angeles, CA, and another location in Chennai, India. Currently, Poshmark has almost 300 employees. In a little over a year, the company has grown 50% and continues to grow rapidly, adding 60 employees in the last six months alone. About 25% of Poshmark’s entire team are engineers, with about 20% of engineers located in the United States. Tien Nguyen, Talent Acquisition Manager at Poshmark, is responsible for hiring and acquiring talented people to help Poshmark scale. Nguyen shared, “Two key areas we think about are diversity and inclusion — how can we tap into different areas to find the diamonds in the rough of different avenues of talent? We also ask ourselves, how do we inspire individuals to provide a valuable impact to the company from day one?”
THE CHALLENGE: FINDING INTERNS WHO ARE SELF-MOTIVATED AND ENGAGING

Poshmark is currently hiring for engineering roles across the board. Nguyen sees value in the 42 program, not only in the self-motivation of our students, but their level of engagement as well, “We understand that 42 is a very self-motivated program where you learn on your own, but we’re able to understand their interests and their motivation coming into a new company. We have gone to other colleges and bootcamps, but the level of interest is not as high as 42. These students blew us away with what they learned in the short amount of time in the program — they understood the presentations and tech lingo of our engineers, and we enjoyed their level of engagement.”
Poshmark’s Vice President of Business Development has been through the 42 program when he was in France and knows Kwame Yamgnane, co-founder and managing director of 42 Silicon Valley. Nguyen recounted, “He introduced us to Kwame and mentioned how successful the program has been in Paris and how they have helped students get into this engineering technology program who are now being hired by successful companies. The program that 42 offers in terms of financial support is incredible. From its tuition-free program to free dormitories, it’s an amazing opportunity for students who don’t have money to pay for a bootcamp. As we are always looking to increase diversity and connect with intelligent and motivated students, we did a presentation at 42 Silicon Valley about a year ago and started to hire interns. One of our software engineering interns from 42, Alex Ezzeddine, just converted to a full-time employee. Alex interned with two different teams — full stack development and core infrastructure — and both teams wanted him to convert to their teams, but for Alex, there was more interest in core infrastructure. Another 42 student, Serena Zhu, just started her first week on our Web Applications Team.”

According to Nguyen, “The value that you see in 42 students is that they know the impact from day one. In a traditional university, it is not as hands-on — they may know the theories, but they don’t know where to start. 42 students hit the ground running and can code right away which adds a lot of value. The coding skills are high, but the ability to communicate, work hard and adapt is even more valuable. At Poshmark, you’re working with collaborative teams, so self-motivation is important. If students are self-motivated, they are going to research the problem, go back to their mentors and create a cleaner solution. What you see in the value that 42 students add to Poshmark is that during their internships they immerse themselves as if they are full-time engineers, mingling with cross-functional departments and gaining a better understanding of how they work.”
Nguyen shared how Ezzeddine focused on a team and built a relationship with them to understand what he could do to service them through one-on-one meetings, “Alex immersed himself in and brought value to the company in so many ways besides coding. For example, we have a team at Poshmark called Posh Authenticate whose focus is to authenticate luxury items to ensure there are no counterfeits. Every day, the Posh Authenticate team has nearly 1,000 shipments that go out, which previously was a manual process, but thanks to Alex’s collaborative efforts, he created a new solution to automate everything through a barcode scanner. Now, a process that used to take three hours of the team’s time is down to 30 minutes.”

Since the beginning, Poshmark has always been focused on its four core values — focus on people, together we grow, lead with love and embrace your weirdness... Nguyen explained, “Empowering others is not only our mission but something we enjoy doing every day. At Poshmark, everyone is contributing and growing both personally and professionally. We all come from different walks of life, have different ideas and ways of approaching a problem, and accepting others and learning how to incorporate these differences to find future solutions is important.” Poshmark is involved in university recruitment, and along with going to different universities, they are building their relationship with 42. Nguyen shared, “As far as hiring future 42 alums, we have more internship opportunities for the summer of 2019 and will be opening potential full-time positions as well. We look forward to continuing our partnership with 42 in the near future.”