



# Tech Talent's Top Tier

Four start-ups took the Forum stage with their ideas and innovation.

By Debbie Bolla

"We are all out looking for what's new, and somewhere in the world there is always new technology," exclaimed Bill Boorman, founder of TruEvents and the host of the 2012 iTalent Competition. And that was precisely the premise of the innovation showdown: executing new ideas with technology. Four start-ups—Suited Jobs, Small Improvement, Zapoint, and 3Desk—went head-to-head on stage before a panel of esteemed judges and an audience whose members had their vote too.

What were they looking for? A company with the most potential to break out in the marketplace. The start-ups tackled tough workforce management issues, including performance, talent acquisition, and contingent labour.

Judging the newbies on five criteria—business value, innovation, technology, visibility, and pitch—was a panel of industry luminaries. It included David Andrews, CEO of AOI and chairman of Host of Ideas; Andy Campbell, HCM strategy director of Oracle; Matt Charney, director of marketing for Talent Technology Corporation; Brad McCaw, senior consultant for Towers Watson; Fiona Reddan of *The Irish Times*; and Paul Hearn, editor of *Computer Scope* and executive publisher of TechCentral.ie. In the end there was only one winner, but each start-up showed remarkable value in increasing efficiency and decreasing the pain points of today's global organisations.

## *SuitedJobs*

"Job seekers and organisations are looking for that perfect fit, but we approach it in a 'I know it when I see it', gut-feeling type of way," said Dr. Daniel Crosby, president of SuitedJobs. "We've tried to package that and put it into a technology that will bring people together and create true fit."

Crosby's background as a psychologist helps. He has first-hand understanding of how organisations tend to hire people based on bias. SuitedJobs is trying to change all that by making the process specific, user-generated, scientific, and actionable. Their solution calculates a total fit score for each potential employee, and that is based on job fit (what the candidate wants) and culture fit (the true culture that the company has to offer).

"By mapping with an algorithm the distance between where they are and where they want to be, we are able to pair people to new jobs, give them a suggestion of how good of a fit they are for their current job, and we are able to suggest types of employment and companies," says Crosby.

## *Zapoint*

"There are two sides to every coin, including the talent management coin," said Chris Twyman, founder and CEO of Zapoint. "Talent management is one side, and career management is the other."

Zapoint is a solution based from the standpoint of an employee. Twyman began his start-up after a beyond-frustrating performance review, he said. His perspective that employees don't necessarily care about the same processes that HR cares about drives his solution from a non-engaging process to a data-driven game changer.

"Employees are the best source for your most up-to-date data in your organisations," says Twyman. "But to get them to enter this data, they need some skin in the game. At Zapoint, we start talking the language of the employee."

The fully integrated career management platform is based on profiles and includes both gamification and analytics. Inputting employee feedback and building profiles is simple and seamlessly integrates with Workday and LinkedIn. The solution encourages stronger performance and career management throughout the entire lifecycle of the employee.

*Small Improvements*

"Our SaaS [software-as-a-service] solution is for improving performance management," said Per Fragemann, founder and CEO of Small Improvements. "You have all the information in the system from throughout the year so the review can be very simple and efficient."

Simplicity is at the root of the Small Improvements solution. Performance reviews, 360-degree feedback, goals and objectives, and continuous feedback are all very easy to enter and track. No more hours spent on an annual review for every employee. Small Improvements puts it all on one page, divided in half by an employee self assessment on one hand and manager review on the other.

Feedback can be shared throughout the year as well. Small Improvements enables managers to give employees a "thumbs up" for a job well done, which can be shared either throughout the company or with management. Employees have the opportunity to manage goals and objectives and share them with managers in order to track their process.

*The Winner: 3Desk*

"Fifty per cent of the U.S. workforce will be temporary by 2020, and in the U.K. the temporary workforce is growing by 10 per cent



**Presenters of the iTalent Competition take the stage to share their innovation.**

each year," noted Razvan Dinu, cofounder of 3Desk. "There aren't great platforms out there, and more and more companies want access to temporary talent."

Until now, says Dinu. He, along with cofounder Tom Savage, launched what they deem the platform for face-to-face-freelancers. Simply put, 3Desk is what you'd find in the middle of the road between job boards and recruiters. The website delivers an incredible reach to local freelancers: to date, 278,000 temporary workers have joined and are in the 3Desk database.

So how does it work? The job search method is based on the job description. When a position is posted, 3Desk creates a matching employee profile. The main elements that are taken into account include skills, location, rate, and availability. Matches are found in the database and freelancers are notified via email.

And it goes a step further. Dinu says 3Desk helps employers sort the applicants and candidates by issuing a score that measures how suitable they are for that job. Employers have the ability to communicate directly with freelancers and hire them through the platform.

Dinu countered criticism that 3Desk was too similar to other temporary workforce platforms, such as Odesk, Elance, and freelancer.com, pointing out that those systems cater to remote workers. "We are focusing more on the worker than the work," he concluded.

Learn more about the winner of the 2012 iTalent Competition on page 34.