
AWS
re:Invent
NOV. 28 – DEC. 2, 2022 | LAS VEGAS, NV

STP202

Startups at scale: What to expect when building an engineering team

Bryan Coon (he/him)

Area Leader, Startup Solutions Architecture
AWS

Jonathan Salama (he/him)

CTO and Co-Founder
Transfix

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

The challenge

Most startups fail.

9 of 10 _____



aws

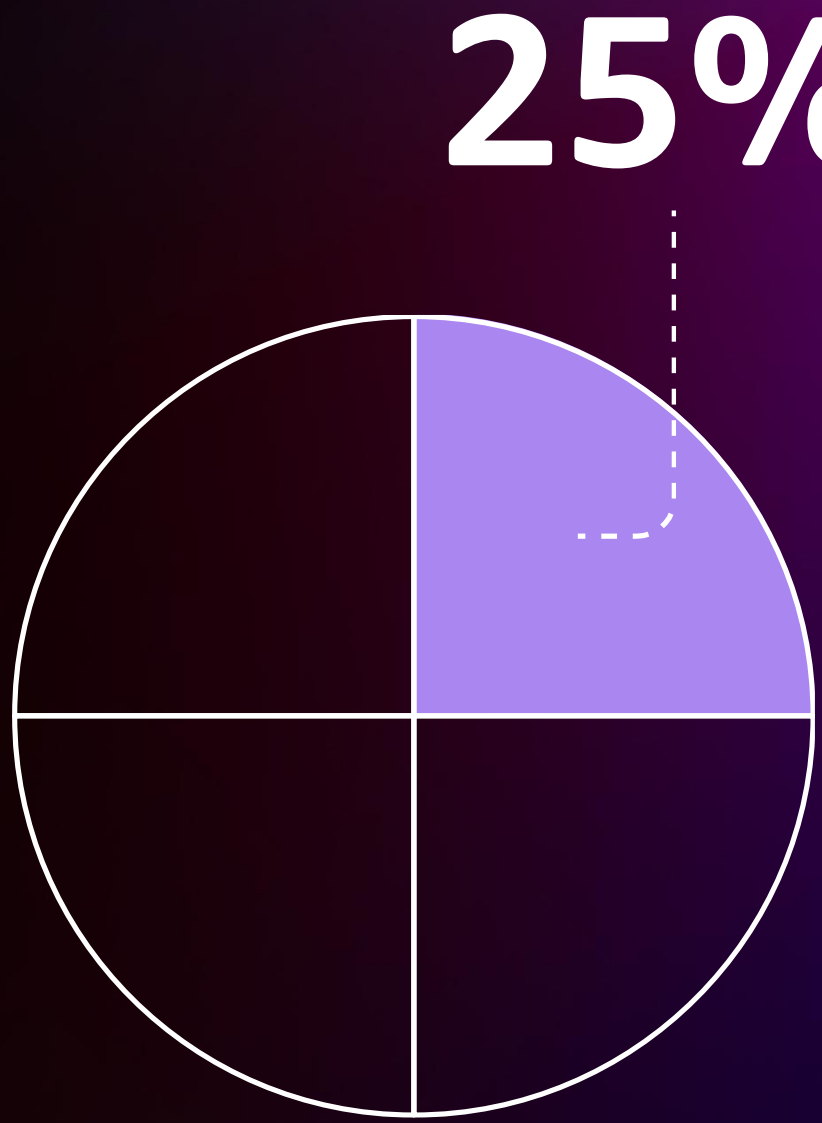
© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

https://www.failory.com/blog/startup-failure-rate

The challenge

A quarter of failures are related to people and technology





aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

https://www.failory.com/blog/startup-failure-rate

Building a great team



Hiring



Culture



Performance



Retention

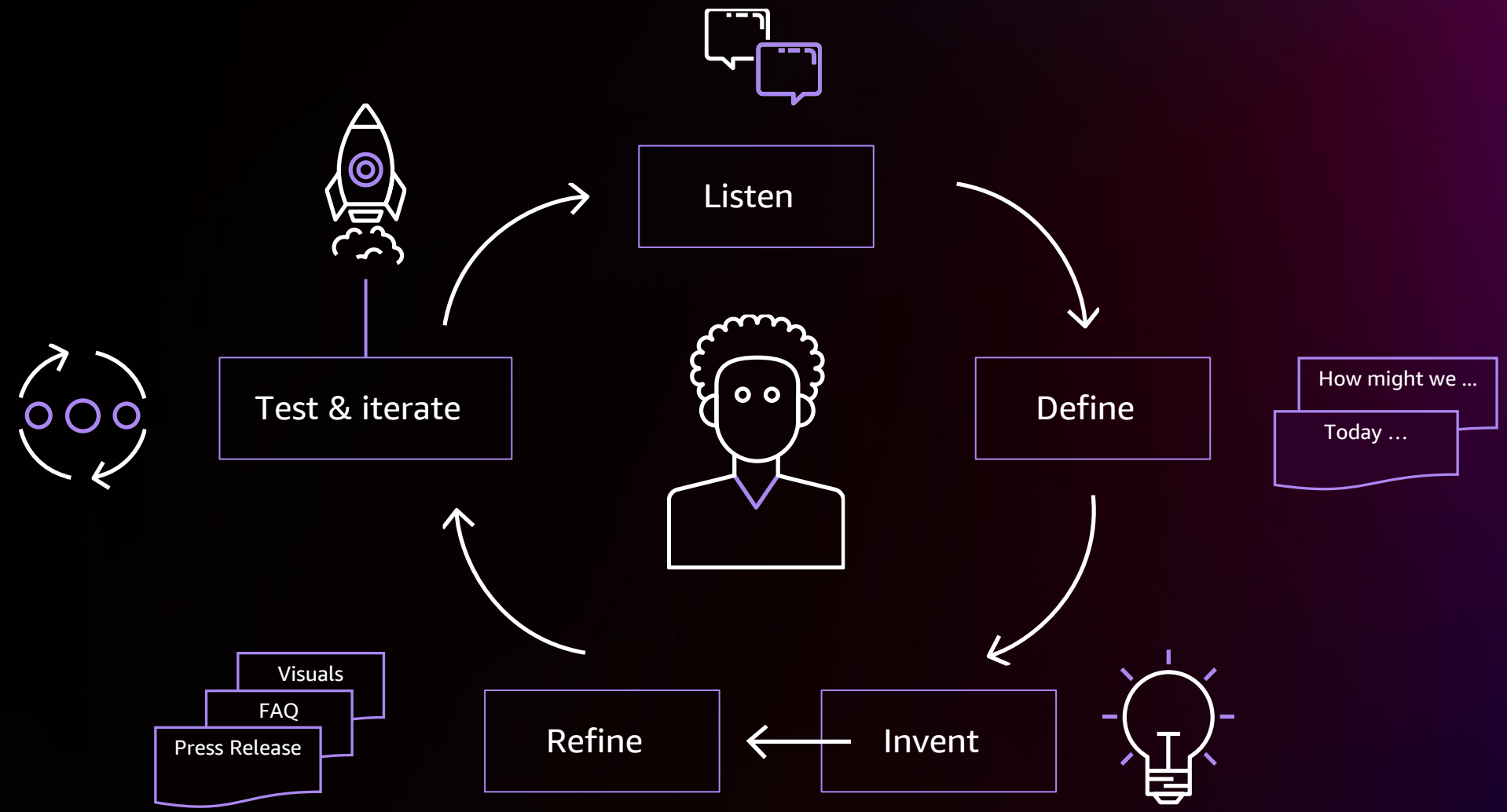
aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Before hiring

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Working backwards from the customer



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Working together towards a press release

Press Release

AWS Announces General Availability of Amazon Location Service

New service makes it easier for customers to add location functionality to their applications without compro
on privacy or security at as low as 1/10th the cost of the most common location-based service (LBS) prov

SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 1, 2021-- Today, Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS), an Amazon.com co
(NASDAQ: AMZN), announced the general availability of Amazon Location Service, a new service that ma
easier and more cost-effective for customers to add location functionality to their applications without
compromising on user privacy or data security. With Amazon Location Service, customers can embed lo
functionality in their applications using data from location-based service (LBS) providers Esri and HERE
Technologies to provide maps, points of interest, geocoding (converting location information to a point
map), route planning, geofencing (creating virtual perimeters), or asset tracking. Amazon Location Servi
low as 1/10th the cost of the most common LBS providers, and customers pay only for the number of use
requests, assets tracked, or devices managed. To get started, visit: https://aws.amazon.com/location/

Location data is vital for companies of all sizes and across every industry to support a range of use cases
asset tracking, route planning, and location-based marketing experiences) that rely on the explosion of
connected devices in the world today. However, due to privacy and security compromises, cost-prohibit
pricing, and a difficult integration process, many companies face significant barriers when integrating lo
functionality into their applications. For example, some LBS providers impose licensing terms that give t
provider the rights to access, use, and commercialize a customer's location data (e.g. the position of use
facilities, or vehicles). Additionally, the pricing from LBS providers often makes it too expensive for custo
use location functionality in all of the ways a customer may want to use it. Even when the licensing term
price are less prohibitive, onboarding an LBS provider requires customers to invest significant resources
integrating data and building supporting tools before using the provider's location data in an application
more advanced use cases like asset tracking or geofencing, a customer may need to build the solution fr
scratch, which can add months of development time. Furthermore, some customers may want to use ar

FAQs

FAQ – Customer

1. What is Amazon Location Service?
Amazon Location Service is a fully managed service that makes it easy for developers to add location
functionality, such as maps, points of interest, geocoding, routing, tracking, and geofencing to their appl
without sacrificing data security, user privacy, data quality, or cost.

2. Why should I use location data in my applications?
Location functionality is increasingly used in business and consumer applications. You can use location s
to solve problems such as displaying data on top of a map to provide geographic context, determining tr
time and distance, looking up points of interest, and constraining actions to specific locations. The use o
location functionality enables capabilities such as map-based visualizations, asset tracking, location-base
customer engagement, and delivery or ride-sharing applications. Visit the Amazon Location Services Cus
page for real world examples.

3. What can I do with Amazon Location Service?
With Amazon Location Service, you have access to cost-effective location-based services (LBS) using high
data from global, trusted providers Esri and HERE, and you can easily integrate maps, points of interest,
geocoding, routing, tracking, and geofencing in to your applications. Amazon Location Service enables yo
bring sophisticated location-enabled applications to production quickly, without the high cost of custom
development. Its affordable data, including tracking and geofencing capabilities, and built-in metrics for
monitoring reduce your costs and development time. Additionally, Amazon Location Service integrates w
several AWS services to further speed application development. For more information on AWS integrati
Q: How does Amazon Location Service integrate with other AWS services? Also, visit the features page to
more about each of the Amazon Location Service Features.

4. Where is Amazon Location Service available?
Amazon Location Service is available today in US East (N. Virginia), US East (Ohio), US West (Oregon), Eu

Visuals



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

How we started at Transfix



We knew what to build

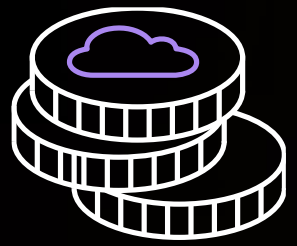


We did not understand how to organize and allocate capital to execute

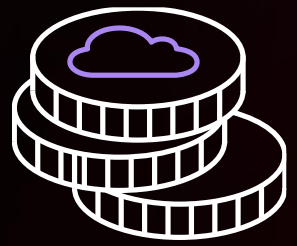
aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

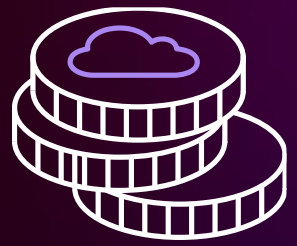
Before you start hiring



Leverage Mechanisms



Work backwards from the customer – What do they want?



Day 1, think about culture, process, and skills

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Hiring

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Tip:



Diversity and inclusion in hiring

86% of women and **74%** of men say that an employer's D&I policy is important when deciding whether or not to work for them.

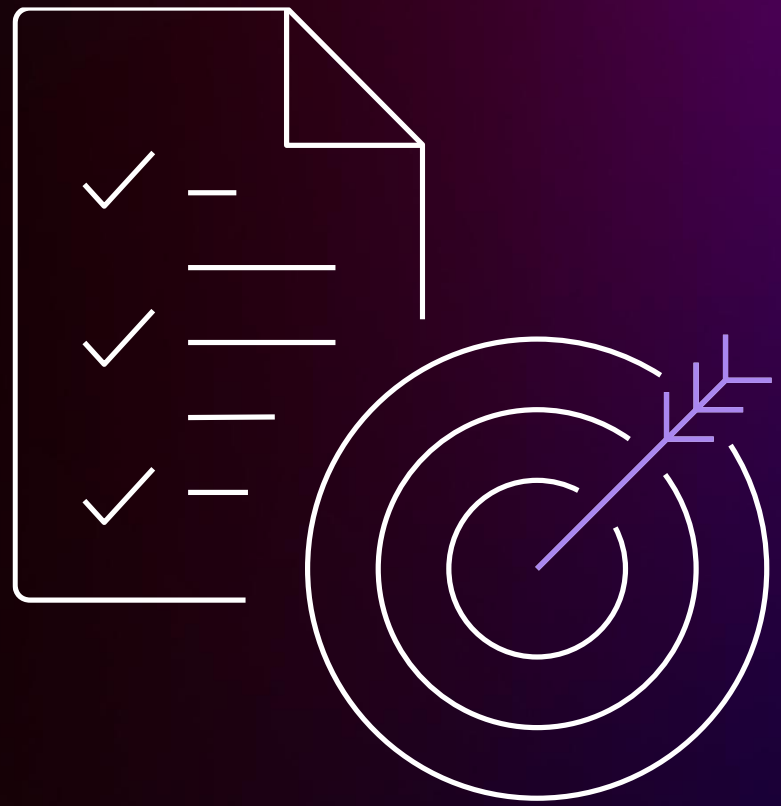
Source: Glassdoor

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

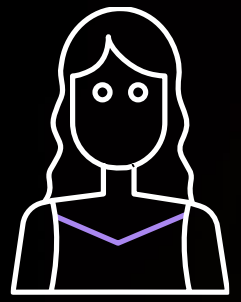
Making your first hires

- Look for complementary skills
- Sell your idea to candidates
- Explore local network first
- Earn candidate trust



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Hiring challenge



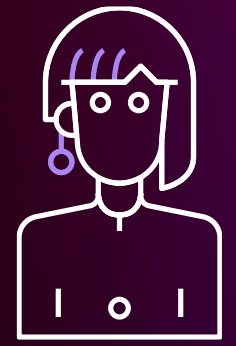
Candidate 1

- Early career
- Low ego
- Curious



Candidate 2

- Transitioning to tech
- Industry experience
- Independent
- Customer-driven



Candidate 3

- Senior technical
- High business acumen
- High ego
- “Rockstar”

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Interviewing at Transfix

Before

- Used our networks
- First phone call was really a sales call
- Interviewed with the entire company (2 to 4 people)
- Interview for skills, culture passion

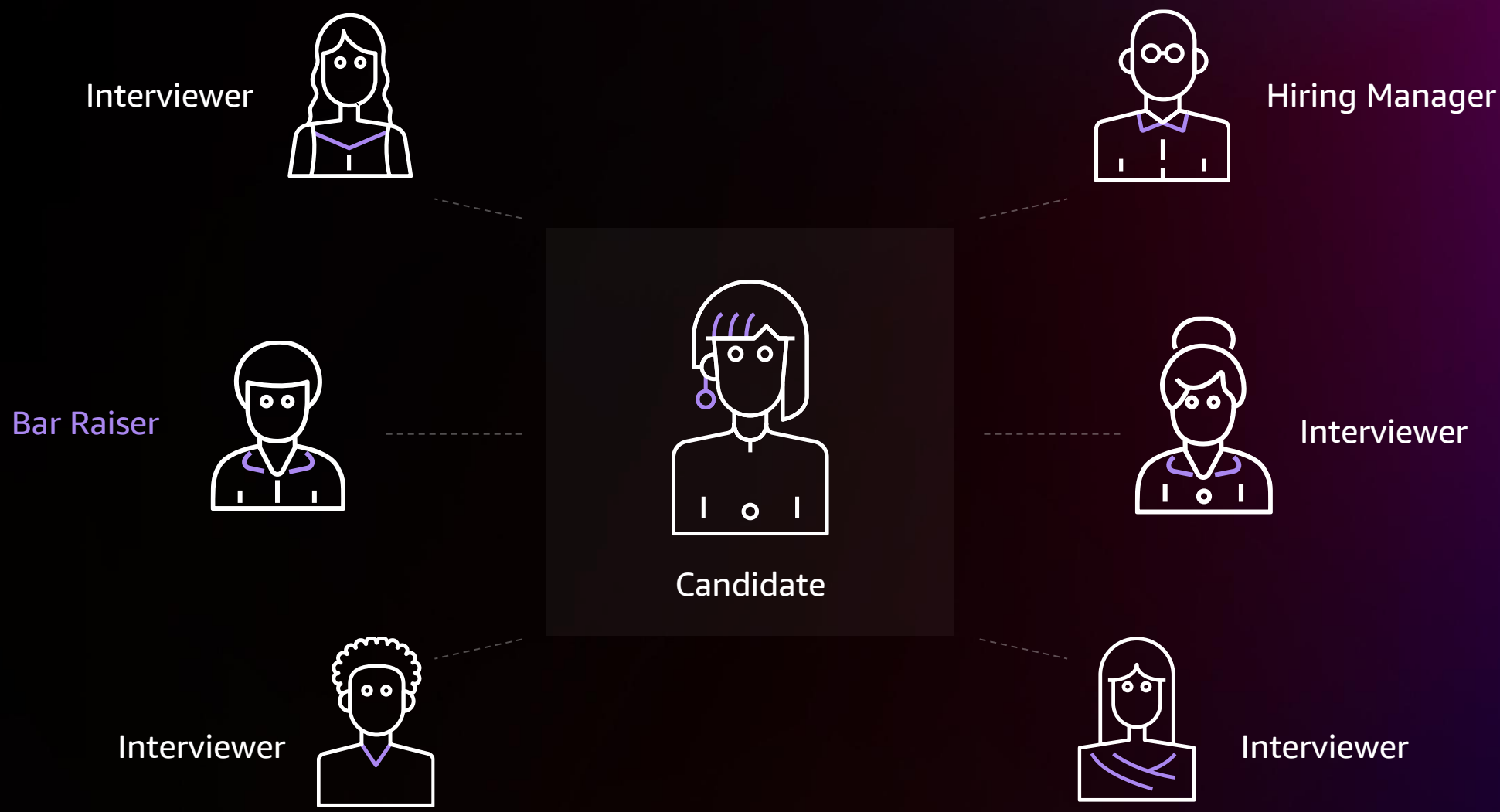
Now

- Create a job description
- Market the role
- Create the right interview question / panel
- Regroup / Train interviewer

aws

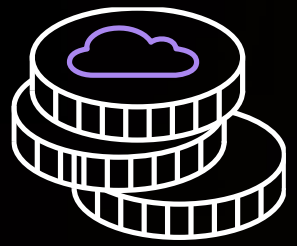
© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

The Amazon loop

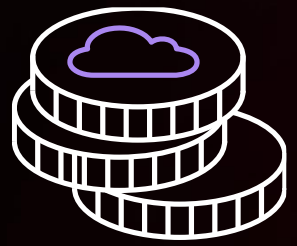


© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

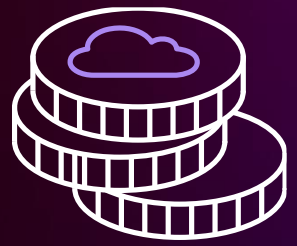
Thinking about hiring



Hire for the stage of your company



Leverage a mechanism for hiring!



Always be looking for talent!

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Culture

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

“You can write down your company culture, but when you do so, you're discovering it, uncovering it – not creating it ”

Jeff Bezos

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Tip:



Diversity and inclusion in culture

Diverse teams are **60%** faster at making decisions

Source: Cloverpop

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Tip:



Diversity and inclusion in culture

Top diverse companies are **15%** more likely to have higher returns for gender diversity and **35%** more likely for racial and ethnic diversity

Source: McKinsey

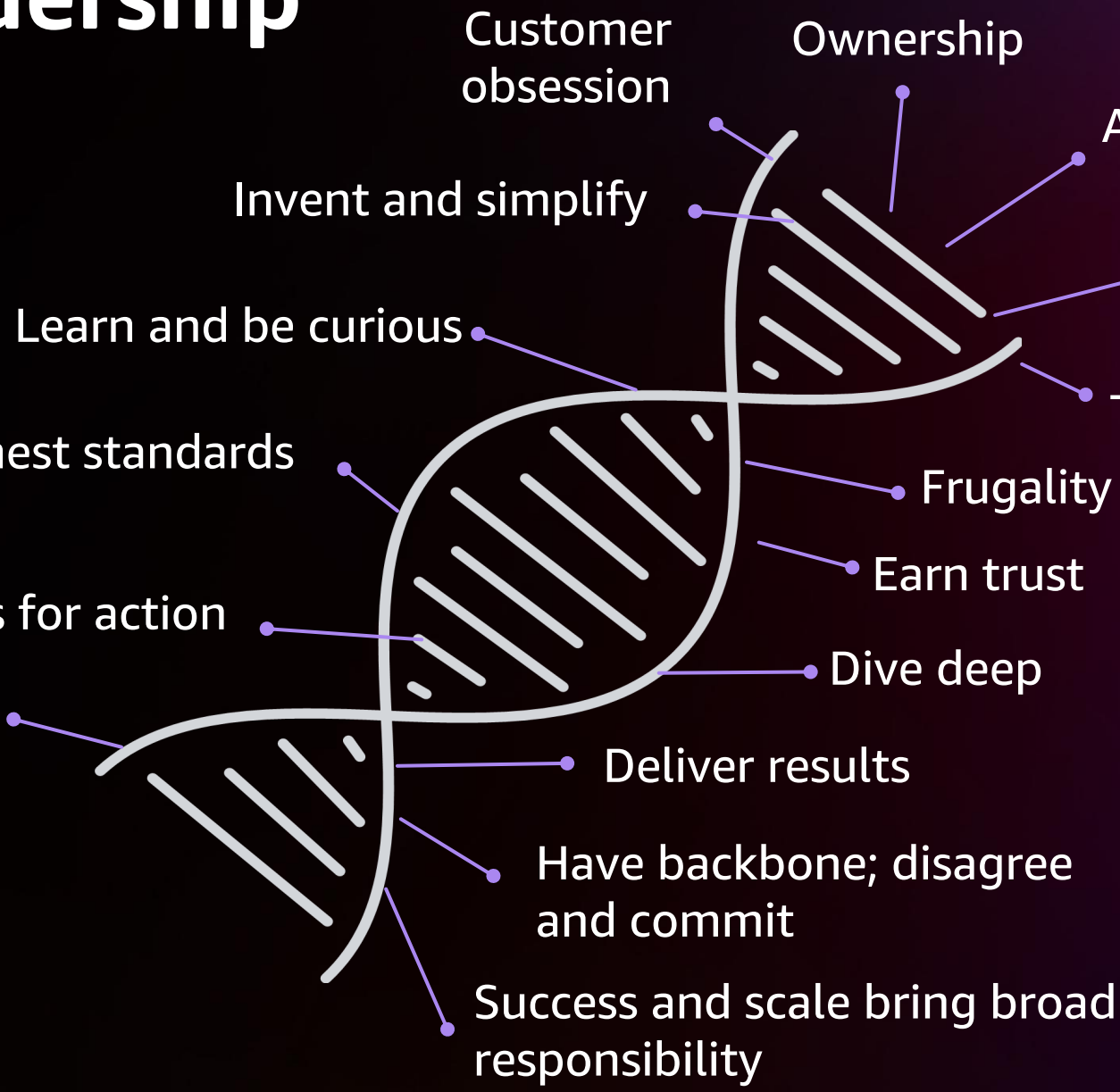
© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

The pillars of culture at Transfix

Inclusion	Excellence	Integrity
Fun	Boldness	Agility
Tenacity		

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Amazon leadership principles



…unless you know better ones. Please be a leader.

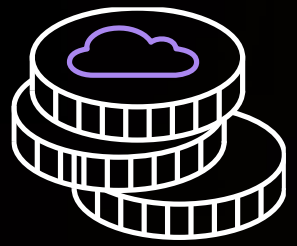


https://www.amazon.jobs/en/principles

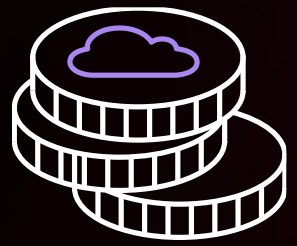
aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

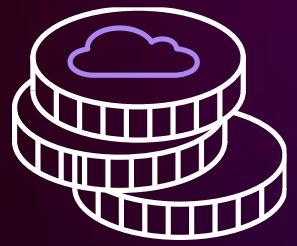
Thinking about culture



Prioritize culture, prioritize diversity and inclusion



Define and document your culture



Don’t be afraid to hire “different”

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Performance

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Performance at Transfix

- Setup a framework
- Radical candor
- Set goals and measure
- Deliver on the deadline or communicate



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

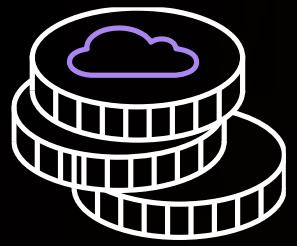
Performance at Amazon

- Insist on highest standards
- Hire and develop the best
- The bar
- Role-leveling guidelines
- Data gathering
- Performance conversations

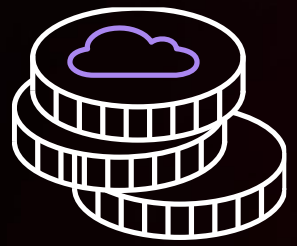


© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

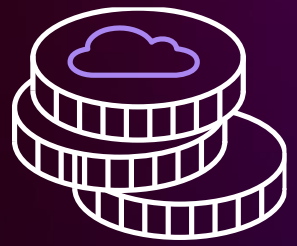
Thinking about performance



Create a safe space for communication



Practice active listening to capture data



Manage low performance to retain the high performers

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Retention

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Tip:



Diversity and inclusion in retention

New employees are **42%** more likely to stay in an inclusive workplace

Source: HBR

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Tip:



Diversity and inclusion in retention

Those who perceive bias are more than **three times as likely** to say that they're planning to leave their current jobs within the year

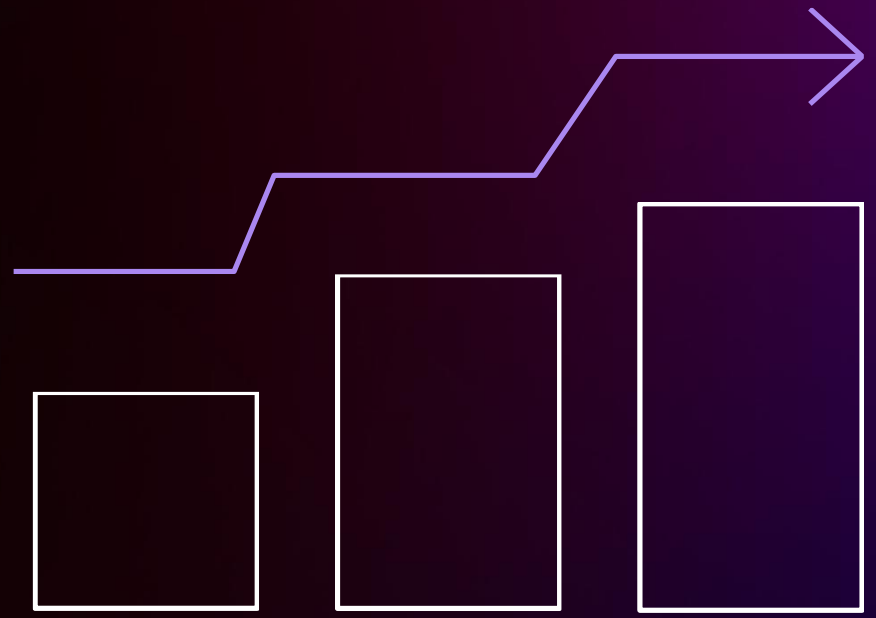
Source: Glassdoor

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Keeping top talent at Transfix

- Empowerment / self-driven
- Purpose
- Celebration
- Career development / mentors / lead



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Keeping top talent at Amazon

- A great culture
- Career opportunities and choices
- Motivation
  - Treating people like adults
  - Letting them become experts
  - Moving barriers
- Pursue autonomy, mastery, and purpose
- Working with cool technology



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.



© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

How Transfix leveraged AWS to accelerate

- Creating Impact
- Daily Results
- Reduced time to deliver models
- Ability to focus on innovation

30x faster from idea to production

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Genomics at Human Longevity Inc.

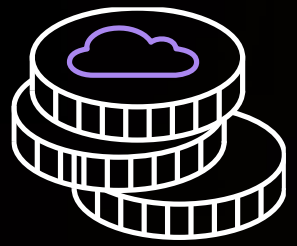
- Infrastructure to do commercial scale DNA analysis took **~6 months**
- That same infrastructure can be deployed in **~3 days**
- Out of a team of **25** engineers, **11** are now at AWS



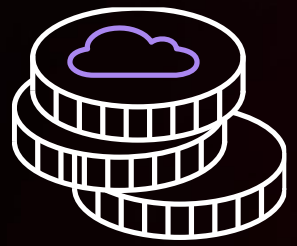
aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

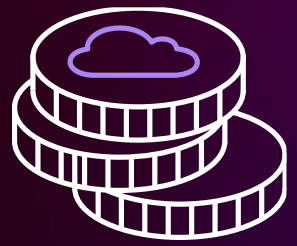
Thinking about retention



Enable the pursuit of autonomy, mastery, and purpose



Have regular career conversations



Don’t micromanage high performers

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Summary



Hiring



Culture



Performance



Retention

aws

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

“Great things in business are never done by one person; they're done by a team of people”

Steve Jobs

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Thank you!

Bryan Coon
bccn@amazon.com

Jonathan Salama
jonathan@transfix.io



Please complete the session survey in the **mobile app**

© 2022, Amazon Web Services, Inc. or its affiliates. All rights reserved.