



BESTPATH

**Filling the chronic  
skills shortage gap.**



## Fact:

**There is a shortage of qualified network engineers and organisations are in a skills shortage crisis - particularly when it comes to networking.**



**According to the Uptime Institute, 50% of businesses reported difficulty finding qualified candidates for open roles in 2020. This is up from 41% the previous year and 38% in 2018:**

The digital and tech talent crunch will reach a labour skills shortage of 4.3 million workers by 2030. For the all-important technology sector, we found that a labor skills shortage will reach 4.3 million workers by 2030.

It's a **bold** statement that's been repeated so many times that it must be true... or is it? The cycle consists of recruiters quoting their clients looking for new talent, who espouse the challenges faced in finding good talent, who then tell the recruiters who, in turn inform the clients and so on. But is the talent shortage all just hype or are we really facing a crisis of talent and skills shortages?

With our current growth trajectory here at BestPath we go through several hiring cycles per year - bringing in a mix of recent graduates and skilled, experienced consultants. Is it easy? Definitely not. Are we experts? That's not for us to judge, but we have extensive experience within the networking space and have formed some strong opinions.



## I demand to be heard!

The recent pandemic and the social changes it brought with it have added a new wrinkle to the process. Potential employees are now defining “how” they want to work - hybrid working arrangements in particular have caused challenges for us. As a company we solve challenges for our customers together and that doesn’t always occur between 9-5 Monday to Friday, and even though we are a tech company, we are at our best when working together.



This has in some ways limited our potential pool of employees, but it is something we won't compromise on. We know ourselves and how we work and need to have team members who share our ethos or we will not be able to uphold our own values.

Even before the pandemic the technological landscape was shifting. With the pace of change increasing and the introduction of Public Cloud, Modern Data Centre and campus design, Network Automation, NetDevOps, Full Stack Observability, combined with modern working habits,- is there such a thing as a network renaissance person or are we all doomed to be siloed specialists in a specific area?





Many people talk about generalists vs. specialists and this is in part fueling the debate on skills shortages - but it is our opinion and our hiring practice, that there is no substitution for a strong grounding in network fundamentals. Everything builds from these basic building blocks and only by understanding the core principles are we able to make informed decisions that support the challenges of our clients. When we interview, we qualify first by fundamentals, and then look at the specialist talents required. Network technologies evolve but the fundamentals underpinning those new shiny toys remain the same.



In addition to our hiring policies, we have a very strong culture of upskilling and mentoring. Not every candidate will be an expert in all current technological solutions, but they should be willing to commit to a career of continual learning. Our ethos has always been that no one person knows everything and if they say they do, they're lying. However, as a team, we can find the answer.



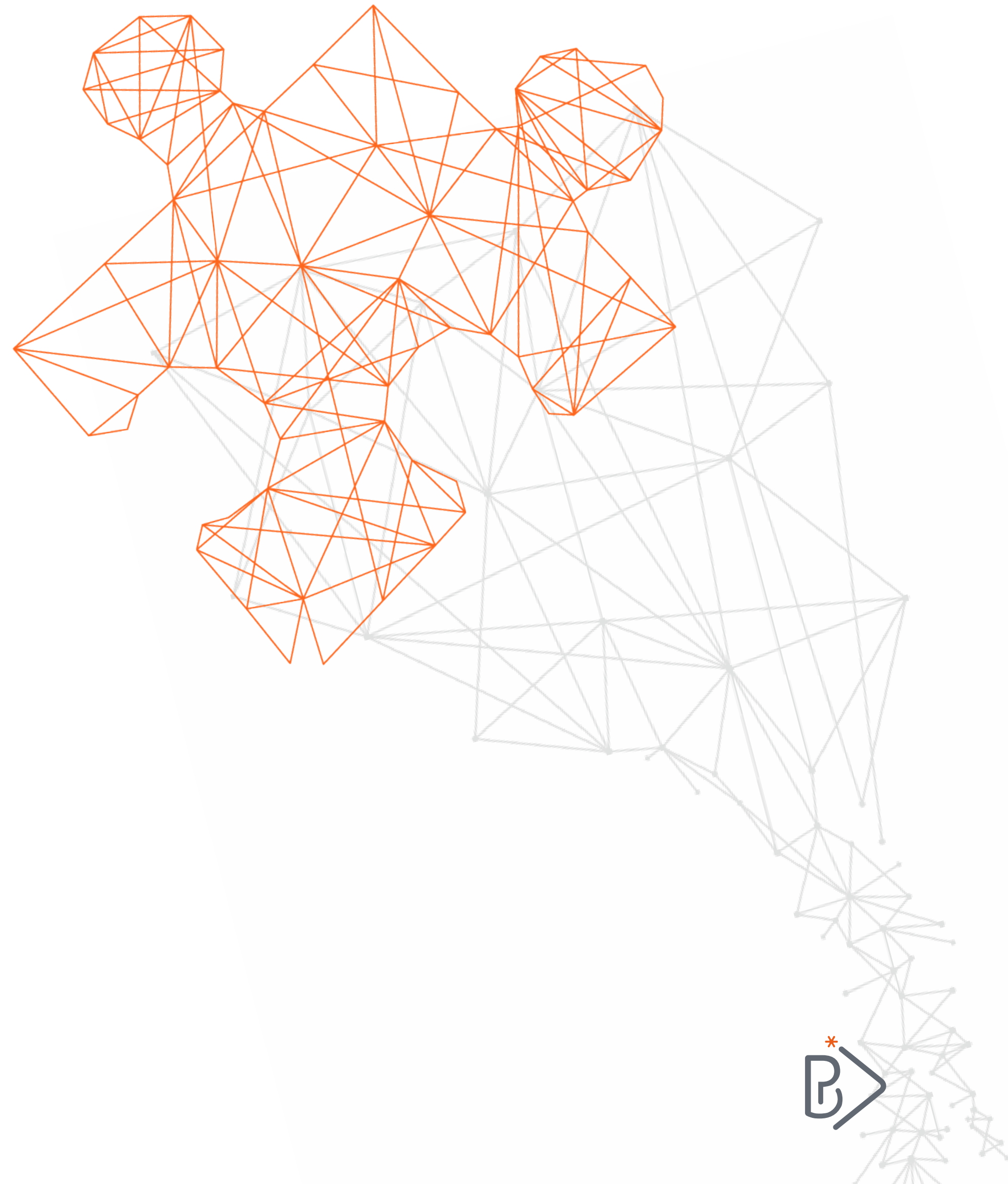
Over the years, we've made some excellent hires, and we've learned some valuable lessons along the way. We continue to be humbled by having to find new ways to assess our ideal hire.

Here are a few lessons that we've learned so far:



## 1. Define the opportunity

Really understand the role you are trying to fill. A well defined opportunity reduces the number of unqualified candidates and ensures the candidates applying are interested in what you need. This will save you time and disappointment.







## 2. Hire someone who will be **challenged** by the job

People grow through challenge, and teams grow together when they learn and succeed together.



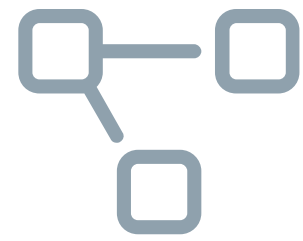
## 3. Know your (and their) **worth**

Many candidates have potentially unjustified high salary expectations, and while we will always pay for quality, in the current market, we are seeing candidates overestimate their earning potential. We appreciate the current economic state and that everyone wants higher salaries but these requests have to be realistic and backed up by experience or skills. Benchmark and look around.



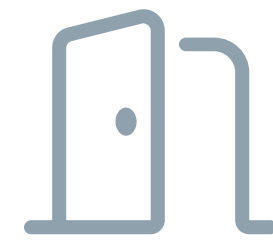
## 4. Know **your** culture!

Be culture savvy. It may seem like a strange thing but at BestPath we are a close knit group and can tell you from experience that fit is just as important as skills - in some cases more so. You can train people, but it's very difficult to change people's own principles.



## 5. Define **how you work**, not just what you work on

If everyone doesn't agree up front how you work as a team you will be right back into the hiring cycle again. up by experience or skills. Benchmark and look around.



## 6. Be **open minded**

Someone who may not be the perfect fit on a CV, may actually be the perfect fit for your team. Transferable skills and a desire to learn often provides an opportunity to find a hidden gem others may have overlooked. Over time, the definition of our 'ideal candidate' has evolved. The same 'core values' of staff can present themselves in many different, often unexpected ways.



## 7. Be **patient**

We know it may not always be possible, but rushing into a new hire to fill a gap in the org chart or solve a pressing need is a short term solution that often backfires. Wait it out - you just have to find the right person once.



## If there is a shortage of interested applicants - we're not seeing it.

We are still getting a lot of applications for all the roles we post, but for us, because fit is so important, we are only progressing with about 10% of all applications that we receive. Hiring the current and next generation of employees is tough, but just like building out the perfect network, getting the fundamentals right is the critical step to building a great team of talented people.



BESTPATH

We're BestPath. The unsung heroes, working quietly and competently behind the scenes to inspire and empower our clients. Combining curiosity with innovation we deliver agile, secure and trusted network infrastructures that enable businesses to deliver exceptional services and outstanding customer experiences. Let's chat about how we can do just that, for you.



[linkedin.com/company/bestpath/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bestpath/)



[info@bestpath.io](mailto:info@bestpath.io)



+44 (0)203 879 4826

