

Talent & Technology, “Equipos y Talento”

Madrid, Spain – *These days, technology has acquired a unique glamour and allure. Every day brings extensive IT coverage in the economic and general news media, and everybody wants to be a tech-driven digital player.*



When I started in the IT sector as a programmer, almost 30 years ago, we were considered geeks. Back then in the 90's, marketing was “the thing.” I remember coding onto cards data that the systems operators later “translated” and which appeared in the “host” the next morning. That seems like the Stone Age now!

In those days, most IT companies were large corporations that made and sold hardware or software, with IBM and HP overwhelmingly dominating the market. These giants focused on implementation, adapting products to the business needs of companies in various industrial sectors.

At that time, IT companies asked recruiters for candidates with technical profiles: engineers, computer scientists, physicists and mathematicians. In time, many of these technical employees acquired management skills and then transitioned to the marketing or commercial divisions of the company.

Technological developments, mainly in terms of processing capacity, led to the rise of new players with innovative products that “challenged” the large corporations. In the late 90s and early 2000s, we saw an increase in technologies that responded to the needs of companies, which were rapidly accepted by the market.

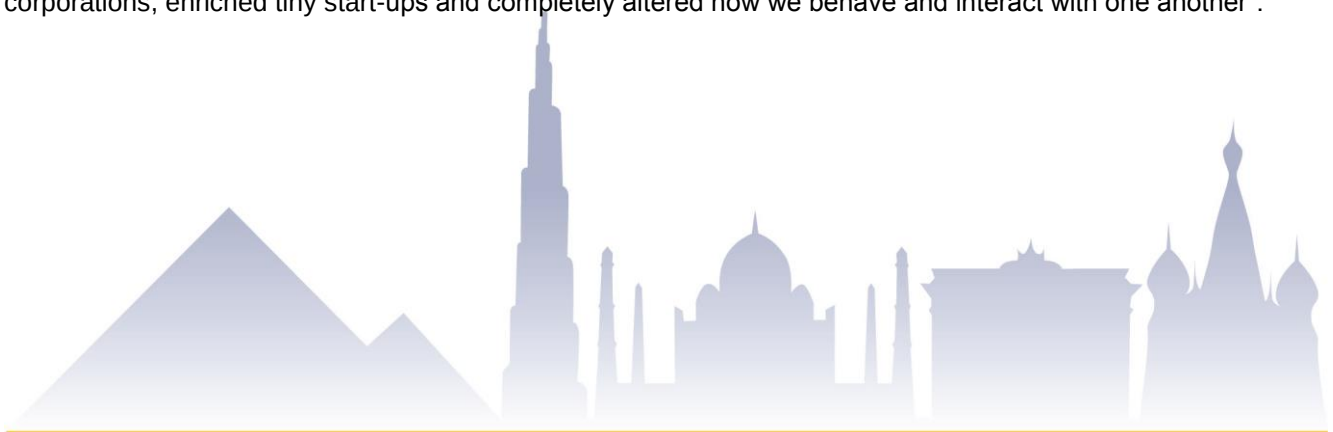
However, the candidate profiles remained similar, although we saw increased demand for commercial, pre-sales, and marketing management profiles to help the new products penetrate their natural market.

At the same time, the “Telco” companies woke up to the potential of the data economy. They transformed from workaday utility companies to full-blown IT companies, with a high demand for engineers. In the telecommunications ecosystem, operators and suppliers are symbiotic and mutually dependent, providing complementary products and technical solutions; they cannot survive without each other.

Without us noticing, digital technologies have brought new, unique and disruptive concepts in IT: Social, Mobility, Analytics, Cloud, the Internet of Things – and we can't even begin to guess what might be around the corner!

My friend A. Arroyo Mir says that the “sixth” disruptive technology will be crowd, which we still do not know how to handle. (digitalbankingporaam.blogspot.com). Over the next few years, the Internet of Things is expected to connect 25 billion devices.

In some ways, it's hard to talk about “digital”, because the meaning of the word varies depending on who you're talking to. I recently read on Arroyo's blog that “Digital has created and destroyed industries, bankrupted major corporations, enriched tiny start-ups and completely altered how we behave and interact with one another”.



Digital technology, in its different applications, has allowed us to expand the way in which we communicate, favoring the flow of information and its immediate availability through communication networks (Mobility). It has allowed the creation of business opportunities for interaction and information, indeed for everything that moves throughout the Internet (Social, Mobility). We have unprecedented power to analyse structured and unstructured data and predict trends, enabling us to make smarter business decisions (Analytics, Big Data). Information communication through networks allows us to store and access data and systems remotely, reducing costs and enhancing promptness, by outsourcing our infrastructure.

Finally, we are starting to sense the potential of bestowing intelligence on inert objects and allowing them to communicate with each other (IoT).

My friend A. Gonzalez San Roman, who recently became a father, has some ideas for the Internet of Things on his blog (Digital.alexgsr.es): "The necessary technologies already exist, and in some cases are even available on the market:

- Pacifiers measuring the baby's temperature and sending it to the parent's mobile;
- Diapers that sense wetness and notify when the baby needs changing;
- Motion sensors that report when the child wakes up."

The emergence of these technologies affects the entire business world. As traditional companies use digital technologies to make their business processes more efficient, they create new communication channels with customers – and entirely new business opportunities.

The new talent

Our major banks are keen to hire professionals with technological/digital profiles for the "digitization of banking". Years ago, the bankers asked IT companies to find solutions; today, business experts and technology specialists work together to achieve a common vision, with benefits and opportunities for all.

As the banking sector demonstrates, any business can be reinvented, opening up new collaborations and new channels of communication, and generating new ideas. All industries now have a digital agenda.

At Pedersen & Partners, we are sometimes asked to work with technical profiles in areas such as Big Data, Cloud, Infrastructure or Platforms, and these can be hard to find quickly, especially in markets that are not fully mature. But overall, our experience is that these profiles are just a "matter of time"; all we need to do is successfully train professionals with certain base skills. Of course, we have to know how to locate and value these individuals first.

It is much harder to find profiles for Chief Digital Officers and the like, whose responsibility is to merge technology and business, and who need to understand the potential and capacity of technologies by inventing new processes and improving existing ones. For example, it is useless for a company to invest in Big Data if nobody understands the business implications or the potential of these technologies.

At Pedersen & Partners, employers in Western Europe are most likely to request a mixed profile of this type.

When adding value, it is easier for a technical profile to evolve and understand the business, than for a pure business profile to evolve and understand the new technologies

Technology companies have different demands, and usually prioritise up-to-date technical knowledge and methodology. Modern IT products tend to be on a much faster schedule for development and implementation than was seen with older products. However, in Spain, subsidiaries of IT multinationals seldom require technical profiles, as the innovation tends to be centralised in regional hubs.

Management profiles are becoming more sophisticated to serve the market, with differentiation by type of account (Corporate or Large Account, Mid-Market). Relationships with partners and implementations of solutions for more dispersed or less-relevant markets are becoming more precisely defined, with solutions for the mass consumer (B2C) and business (B2B) sectors, and marketing becoming more tailored and relevant.

The emergence of the Cloud, which favours the provision of software services rather than products, has forced IT companies to become more solution-oriented. Therefore, IT companies need marketing professionals who understand the differences, and can explain to client companies the ways in which value can be created from technology.

IT consulting firms and companies that implement management and niche applications require technical profiles that are highly specialised in new technologies, in addition to profiles that understand and can learn the differing requirements of each individual industry. Specialisation is fundamental.

Teamwork and flexibility

In this rapidly changing market, it is extremely difficult to predict the technical skills that will be critical in the near future. When I need to choose a professional, I select a versatile person who is demonstrably able to learn and open to improvement, with a conscientious, resilient and collaborative spirit. Teamwork has never been more important; the best solutions can only be found when there is collaboration between people with different technological capabilities, and between business and technology.

The best solutions can only be found when there is collaboration

Of course, the ideal profile for an IT executive is that of a professional who has a technical background, and adds value to this with an understanding of and an interest in business processes, and concomitant extensive experience.

At Pedersen & Partners we emphasise the value of IT profiles and their technical capabilities, business knowledge, creativity and innovation, flexibility and collaborative capabilities.

Pedersen & Partners is one of the fastest-growing, fully integrated Executive Search firms worldwide; it is 100% owned by its partners who all work full-time to serve its clients. The firm celebrated its 15th anniversary in January 2016, and to mark this occasion, it has created a timeline web page <https://pedersenandpartners.com/15th-anniversary/company-timeline>, featuring key milestones for the firm's development and has released an anniversary video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOy0i_FBkgI.



[Puri Paniagua](#) is a Client Partner at [Pedersen & Partners](#). Ms. Paniagua brings a successful record of experience in the Executive Search industry, having successfully completed many senior level and executive level search assignments in her career, also gaining experience in management audit and coaching in the Technology, Professional Services and Consumer Goods sectors. Before establishing her career in Executive Search, she previously worked with Accenture for over twenty years, where she was a Partner.

Pedersen & Partners is a leading international Executive Search firm. We operate 56 wholly owned offices in 52 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia & the Americas. Our values Trust, Relationship and Professionalism apply to our interaction with clients as well as executives. More information about Pedersen & Partners is available at www.pedersenandpartners.com

If you would like to conduct an interview with a representative of Pedersen & Partners, or have other media-related requests, please contact: Diana Danu, Marketing and Communications Manager at: diana.danu@pedersenandpartners.com