

# How a **flexible, people-centric approach** gives Safeguard Global a hiring advantage

## The challenge

Although the ongoing talent shortage has impacted various industries globally, it's been particularly challenging for companies that rely on top talent to build emerging technologies.

**"It's hard to find the right people,"** says Duri Chitayat, Chief Technology Officer at Safeguard Global, whose teams require in-demand skills in software engineering, service design, platform engineering, DevOps and product management. **"This had an impact on the business. For instance, we were unable to start key projects in emerging technology because finding the people in the usual ways wasn't working."**

"We had been successfully hiring engineers in a few locations," Chitayat said. "But we soon realized we simply couldn't scale."

The team had set aggressive goals to provide new product functionalities and features that the business—and its clients—wanted and needed, but the inability to scale was making it difficult to achieve these goals. Chitayat knew it was time to grow his team—and he knew how he wanted to do it.

It all started with rethinking the way in which he and his team recruited and worked, and this new approach would enable him to build out a highly effective team that continues to surpass their goals quarter over quarter. By utilizing a similar approach to recruiting and working, your multinational business can achieve similar success.



## The solution

Chitayat knew the team had to do something different to hire the tech talent needed to achieve the business goals. Working with his counterparts in HR, his department adopted a [Work in Any Way](#) approach—one that's flexible and people-centric. Or, in Chitayat's tech parlance, an "open source strategy."

**"We need the best talent anywhere, period,"** Chitayat says. This shift meant everything came secondary to finding and supporting talent, even budget: "Find the best talent, and then we'll assess budget."

This strategy ran counter to the traditional way of hiring for tech teams, in which companies focus on a pod structure where teams are grouped together in the same country or market—for instance, a team of eight people in India and another in Switzerland. This approach can ultimately limit the amount of top talent that you can reach.

Instead, Chitayat, the recruiters and senior leadership shifted their focus to creating a flexible and people-centric recruiting and hiring process. Chitayat set up meetings with stakeholders to collaborate and explore ways to improve the hiring and recruiting process to align with the Work in Any Way approach. By being open-minded and combining their collective ideas, they were able to formulate a more effective plan.

One of the biggest changes that came about was implementing a "white glove" service for promising candidates that personalized the recruiting process. This included eliminating the HR prescreen and having the hiring managers be the first ones to talk to potential candidates.

**"We knew teams would need to adjust to a diversity of cultures and time zones, but we felt confident that if we had found the best people, they would find a way to make it work."**



**Duri Chitayat**

Chief Technology Officer  
Safeguard Global



**Lead time is measured by the amount of time from the first line of code until it's live for a customer. So, for instance:**

- You imagine a new feature
- A team starts working on it today
- And it goes live with the client tomorrow
- Then the lead time is 1 day

Despite many challenges that brought about growth and opportunity, it was easier for Chitayat and HR to lead with a flexible and people-centric (Work in Any Way approach) because it's at the core of Safeguard Global's vision, which is to enable companies to hire the talent they need from anywhere (and Safeguard Global aims to do the same internally).

Leading with this strategy could be a potential hurdle for other companies because in order to be successful with it, the hiring manager or team lead needs to be on board with this way of thinking—and equally as passionate and excited about it. A key component of this strategy is to empower and trust the heads of your teams to make decisions on how they structure their team and schedules, for example:

- Does the team work asynchronously or not?
- Are they remote or hybrid?
- Multi-languages?
- What kinds of resources and tools do you offer?



The answers to these questions will vary but at the end of the day, it's up to the person in charge of said team to build out their team in whatever way they want, while keeping in mind flexibility and being people-centric. **The objective at the end of the day should be the overall outcome, not necessarily how your team gets to that outcome**—and some things to keep in mind when building out a high-performing global team include:

1. Focusing on the quality of talent, not cost or geographic location
2. Being open to different experiences, views
3. Adopting and living out a Work in Any Way approach

### Focus on the quality of talent, not cost or geographic location

There are two different types of value props when it comes to the way people look at hiring, according to Chitayat: cost and quality.

**“Cost is the wrong way of looking at it,”** Chitayat says. That makes it a race to whatever is the lowest cost region. Instead, he urges people to focus on quality candidates, especially when hiring for technology teams.

That's because the quality of the product has a direct correlation to the skills and talent of the people you bring on board. Recruiting, hiring and retaining the best talent will have a better return on investment for your company despite the initial higher cost to win that top talent. “Best talent anywhere. Period,” Chitayat says. “Talent is not where it's convenient.”

## Be open to different experiences, views

At Safeguard Global, the recruiters performed an analysis of the best talent markets, then expanded their search for candidates.

Opening up the talent pool resulted in hires from Turkey, Brazil, Spain, Netherlands, Nigeria and Albania, giving the department representation from 14 countries, all working together remotely.

Despite being spread out among different countries, cultures and ways of thinking, Chitayat attributes this diversity adds to their success. He feels that the difference in backgrounds allows the team to be appropriately open-minded to other cultures and ways of thinking.

**“We knew teams would need to adjust to a diversity of cultures and time zones, but we felt confident that if we had found the best people, they would find a way to make it work,”** Chitayat says.

And they did.

“One of our most dynamic teams is just eight people, but its members are spread across multiple continents and time zones,” Chitayat noted. “They’re led by a principal engineer who was born in Kazakhstan, grew up in Poland, and is living in the U.K. His team includes people from Hong Kong, Albania, Brazil and Nigeria.”

**“Diversity is a superpower if you treat it that way,”**

Chitayat says. He believes that if you respect people for their expertise, you’ll get good results. “Our most diverse teams are our highest performing ones—they’re slower to assume.” Diverse teams are more likely to search for clarity and engage in thoughtful conversations to further understand differing points of view—whereas teams with less diversity may be more apt to take things at face value.

## Adopt and live out a Work in Any Way approach

Last but certainly not least is leading with a flexible and people-centric strategy, enabling you to recruit and retain top talent.

### → FLEXIBLE

Crucial to the new strategy was offering workers flexibility in how they work. **“We hire full-time employees, part-time workers, contractors—we use all the different work classifications in order to access the best talent anywhere,”** Chitayat says.

Chitayat encourages his teams to design their work flows so that they’re suited to the members of the team, as well as the problem the team is trying to solve.

**“We’ve created a culture that empowers teams to select what works best for them, and we trust them with the outcome.”**

Duri Chitayat, Chief Technology Officer, Safeguard Global

“In a remote environment, focusing on hours isn’t practical. It’s much better to focus on outcomes,” Chitayat says. “Are they achieving their goals? If not, ask what they need. **We’ve created a culture that empowers teams to select what works best for them, and we trust them with the outcome—which supports accountability.**”

For some of his team members that may mean synchronous work, a four-day workweek, or other teams may decide to work the same schedule with designated days for no meetings. They are empowered to set schedules that work best for them, the team and the specific project.

Iain McCallum, a principal engineer on the team, cites this flexibility in contributing to his work-life balance.

“I have been able to take every other Friday off to look after my daughter, so she’s only in nursery four days a week as opposed to five,” McCallum says. “It makes up for the extra hours I work sometimes, and it’s nice to find some time outside the 9 to 5 so I can get some work done in peace.”

**“Not having to get up as early as 5 a.m. every day and spend hours in traffic has really freed me up to do a lot more. I feel a lot more energetic at work...”**

**Malik Mahmud**

Software Engineer  
Safeguard Global

Malik Mahmud, a software engineer, seconds these sentiments. “Not having to get up as early as 5 a.m. every day and spend hours in traffic has really freed me up to do a lot more. I feel a lot more energetic at work. I can take time out to visit the gym and prepare healthy meals,” Mahmud says.

## → PEOPLE-CENTRIC

Perhaps the most critical component of the Work in Any Way approach is the people-centric mentality, which values workers as individuals with distinct goals and needs. For Chitayat’s teams, this means policies that consider worker preferences, from technology to training offered.

“It starts from the recruitment process through onboarding and into their work experience.” Chitayat says. “We start with the problem. The experts pick their tools and technology to solve it. Top talent wants that autonomy.”

Training is another way the department puts people first.

**“If we want to retain the best people, we need to be a learning organization. We set that as an objective, and initiated workshops, lunch and learns, and a training platform,”** Chitayat says.

“We survey quarterly to confirm that everyone has valuable learning opportunities because we never want to leave a person behind. People are going to be constantly pressed to change, learn and grow.”

The people you choose to hire and the culture you shape are at the core of being people-centric. Chitayat urges hiring managers not to hire for culture fit and instead hire for culture add.

## The results

Since adopting a Work in Any Way approach in early 2021, the Safeguard Global technology and product organization has been able to overcome its hiring challenges and see exceptional results.

The department grew from 30 to 125 technology professionals—so a total of 95 in just a few quarters (30 of which came from an acquisition). **“We’ve been able to build great teams,”** Chitayat says. **“And as a result, we’re able to create the products our business partners and clients need.”**

The organization has also seen a significant improvement in the number of monthly product releases, as well as faster time to market for new products and better quality.

In early 2021, the monthly release would typically have been under development for five to six months. The team was able to increase their monthly product releases by Q2 2022 by 10x, year over year.



### What is a monthly release?

It’s when an update to the software is made available to customers. It can be something as small as adding automation to a single activity or it could be as large as a new product.

They were also able to reduce their lead time by 70% from Q4 2021 to Q3 2022. With this improved lead time, they were able to remain agile and responsive to not only their clients but also to try and test new approaches as they continued to build new functionality for the product offerings. A big part of their product roadmap was to create new features for the global employer of record product like:

- Reducing worker onboarding from an average of six days to less than one day
- A client self-service portal that enables clients to update payroll instructions
- A mobile app that supports push notifications, time and expenses

And this employer of record offering is what enabled the team to be successful with this new approach as it provided them with the **ability to hire beyond borders—and the peace of mind they needed while doing so.** An EOR can provide the same benefits for your multinational business.

By utilizing one, there won’t be any worry that you can’t hire top talent because they are in a region where you aren’t able to process payroll compliantly or maybe where you don’t have knowledge about local customs and regulations. You’ll be able to hire without compliance worry and *meet top talent where they are.*

Ultimately, by being set up to hire workers anywhere, embracing flexibility in location and work style, and putting people first, you’ll be able to compete for and win over top talent—and see staggering results by doing so.



**INDUSTRY**  
Human Resources Technology

### RESULTS

**316% increase**  
in global tech headcount

**10X more**  
monthly product releases

**84% faster**  
product lead time to market



Safeguard Global is a future of work company that helps workers and companies thrive in the global economy. Backed by a data-rich technology platform, local expertise, and industry-leading experience, Safeguard Global provides end-to-end solutions to manage people and scale operations. With Safeguard Global, organizations can recruit, hire, manage, pay and analyze anywhere in the world, no matter where they are in their growth journey.

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Learn more about how our GEO solution helps organizations adopt a Work in Any Way approach and remain competitive for top talent:

[safeguardglobal.com/GEO](https://safeguardglobal.com/GEO)