

The background features a large magnifying glass with a dark handle and a clear lens, positioned over a field of stylized human figures. One figure in the center is highlighted in a darker purple, while the others are a lighter shade. The overall color palette is various tones of purple.

# BFSI Tech Hiring Cheat Sheet 2026

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Hackathon-Led Hiring for  
Digital, Data & Cyber Talent

## Executive Summary

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Banks and insurers are accelerating investments in **AI, cloud, cybersecurity, data engineering, and digital platforms.**

The challenge is no longer whether to invest in technology.

The challenge is finding people capable of building, securing, and operating these systems.

Traditional hiring approaches—**resume screening, keyword filtering, and interview-heavy evaluation**—often struggle to identify high-performing technical talent.

As a result, many **BFSI organizations** are increasingly exploring practical assessment mechanisms such as hackathons, coding challenges, capture-the-flag competitions, and project-based evaluations to identify candidates with demonstrable skills.

This cheat sheet provides a practical framework for using hackathon-led hiring to evaluate digital, data, and cybersecurity talent.



Source:  
KPMG Global Tech Report 2026 – Financial Services

# Why BFSI Technology Hiring Has Changed

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Financial services organizations are moving rapidly toward AI adoption, cloud modernization, advanced analytics, and digital transformation.

**According to the KPMG Global Tech Report 2026 for Financial Services:**

- Financial services organizations are moving quickly to adopt AI and advanced digital technologies while simultaneously facing talent shortages and technical-skills constraints.

**The report highlights that technology leaders are investing heavily in:**

- AI and advanced analytics
- Cloud platforms
- Cybersecurity capabilities
- Data modernization
- Enterprise-wide transformation

Technology talent is now a strategic capability rather than a support function.

## What This Means For Talent Leaders

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**Hiring requirements increasingly focus on:**

- Cloud engineering
- Data engineering
- AI and machine learning
- Cybersecurity
- Platform engineering
- Digital product development



# The Roles Banks And Insurers Struggle To Fill

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Across the **financial-services industry**, shortages are particularly visible in cybersecurity and advanced technology domains.

**Deloitte** notes that cybersecurity talent shortages continue to affect large organizations globally and that financial-services institutions require high-caliber cybersecurity capabilities to manage growing cyber risks.

## High-Demand BFSI Technology Roles

### Cybersecurity Engineers

Security operations, threat detection, application security, IAM.

### Cloud Architects

Cloud migration, infrastructure modernization, multi-cloud environments.

### Data Engineers

Data pipelines, data quality, data platforms.

### AI / ML Specialists

Model development, AI governance, machine learning operations.

### Platform Engineers

DevOps, automation, infrastructure reliability.

### Key Hiring Challenge

Many of these roles require practical experience that is difficult to validate through resumes alone.

**Source:**

**Deloitte – Finding Cybersecurity Talent in an Altered World**

# Why Traditional Hiring Often Breaks Down

Technology hiring frequently relies on:

- Resume screening
- Generic assessments
- Multiple interview rounds

These approaches can create several challenges.



## Resume Inflation

Technical keywords do not always reflect practical capability.

## Interview Bottlenecks

Senior engineering interviews consume significant leadership bandwidth.

## Passive Talent

Many high-performing technologists are not actively applying for jobs.

## Practical Skill Verification

The most important question remains:

**Can this person solve real-world problems?**

Hackathon-based hiring provides a mechanism to answer that question through observable performance rather than self-reported experience.

# Why Hackathons Work For BFSI Hiring

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Hackathons simulate real-world problem solving.

**Instead of asking candidates to describe what they have done, organizations can observe how candidates:**

- Solve problems
- Collaborate with others
- Design solutions
- Communicate decisions
- Handle constraints

## Particularly Valuable For

- **Digital Engineering**  
Can candidates build working solutions quickly?
- **Data Talent**  
Can candidates derive meaningful insights from data?
- **Cybersecurity Talent**  
Can candidates identify vulnerabilities and respond to threats?
- **AI Talent**  
Can candidates apply AI techniques to real business challenges?

## Additional Benefits

- Employer branding
- Community building
- Candidate engagement
- Identification of passive talent

Academic research also shows hackathons are increasingly used by organizations to identify innovation capability and practical technical skills.

**Source:** Deloitte – Research on hackathon-based talent identification & innovation programs.

# The BFSI Hackathon-To-Hire Framework

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## Step 1

### Define Business-Relevant Challenges

Examples:

#### Digital Banking:

Design a customer onboarding workflow.

#### Data:

Build a fraud-detection model.

#### Cybersecurity:

Identify vulnerabilities in a simulated environment.

#### Cloud:

Optimize a banking application deployment architecture.

## Step 2

### Evaluate More Than Code

Assess:

- Technical depth
- Problem-solving
- Architecture thinking
- Security awareness
- Communication
- Team collaboration

## Step 3

Convert Top Performers Into Interviews.

Interview only the highest-performing participants.

This creates a skills-first hiring funnel.

# Candidate Evaluation Scorecard

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## Technical Execution

30%

Can the candidate build a working solution?

## Problem Solving

25%

Can they navigate ambiguity?

## Architecture & Design

15%

Can they design scalable solutions?

## Security Awareness

15%

Can they identify risks and vulnerabilities?

Especially critical for BFSI environments.

## Communication & Collaboration

15%

Can they identify risks and vulnerabilities?

Especially critical for BFSI environments.

## Recommended Hiring Decision

Do not evaluate candidates solely on final outputs.

### Evaluate:

- Approach
- Reasoning
- Trade-offs
- Collaboration
- Adaptability

These often predict long-term performance more effectively than a single coding exercise.



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## Key Takeaway

The competition for digital, data, AI, cloud, and cybersecurity talent is intensifying across banking and insurance.

As technology skills become harder to validate through resumes and traditional interviews alone, practical assessment mechanisms are becoming increasingly important.

Hackathons should not replace hiring.

They should improve it.

When designed correctly, hackathon-led hiring allows BFSI organizations to identify technical capability, innovation potential, and problem-solving skills before the interview process begins.

## Methodology & Sources

This report was developed using publicly available research and industry publications, including:

- Deloitte – Finding Cybersecurity Talent in an Altered World
- KPMG Global Tech Report 2026 – Financial Services
- Academic research on cybersecurity skill shortages
- Academic research on hackathons, technical assessment, and innovation programs