

**SEATTLE TECHFLASH**  
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## **Is Ukraine the answer to Seattle's tech employment crunch?**

Puget Sound-area companies can't hire engineers fast enough, partly because they're growing so quickly, and partly because the U.S. isn't training enough talent.

Ukraine – a technology epicenter of Eastern Europe – could help solve the region's talent gap, according to entrepreneurs who visited the city Thursday.

Business leaders from companies including [Microsoft](#) (Nasdaq: MSFT) and [Google](#) (Nasdaq: GOOG) met downtown for Seattle Tech Days, a forum to promote collaboration between Seattle and Ukraine. The first U.S.-Ukraine technology forum was in Silicon Valley last year.

The message: Ukraine can help support Seattle-area companies. Hundreds of Ukrainian universities train a combined 36,000 technology graduates each year, including 5,000 aerospace workers.

The cost of living and doing business is lower in Eastern Europe than the Seattle area, so local companies could potentially benefit by sending technical work to countries including Ukraine – as long as they find the right balance.

The balance, though, is tricky. First, outsourcing engineering work is only right for certain companies. If technology is at the core of the business, it might not be the right fit. But every company has to be a technology company. If technology isn't your business' core product, "you should absolutely outsource," Seattle angel investor [Joshua Maher](#) said.

Outsourcing, however, has the potential to impact a startups' ability to attract capital. Investors want to invest locally and they want the founding team to care about the growth of the company. Outsourcing could still be an option, Maher said, as long as founders ensure engineers are truly invested in a startup's success, for example, through stock options.

Under the right circumstances, startups with managers in the Seattle-area and developers in Ukraine could benefit from the combination, he said.

"It's a lot more dynamic," Maher said. "They have the advantage of having the management team next to investors and the ecosystem, while having engineers raised in the great universities (in Ukraine)."

Intellectual property theft is another concern.

Max Gurvits, an angel investor based in Bulgaria, said while he hasn't seen Eastern European engineers blatantly steal intellectual property, some have created products inspired by a former employer's intellectual property. Outsourcing firms are working to bolster protections for customers' intellectual property.

Sofiia Zelenova works for an outsourcing firm. She's an engineering manager for GlobalLogic, a software research and development firm that helps U.S. and Canadian companies send engineering work to countries including Ukraine.

Ultimately, she said Seattle-area companies should recognize the differences between engineers in the U.S. and Ukraine.

"Work is really just work for engineers in the states," Zelenova said. "The specifics of Ukrainian culture are people are very open and take an extra step in whatever they do."

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