OpenAI's head of recruiting: "We're a culture of doers"

In front of an online audience of thousands last Thursday, OpenAI's head recruiter, Joaquin Quiñonero Candela, described one of the common threads that draws talent to the company: OpenAI's *culture*.

"We're a culture of doers who do things – with autonomy, with agency," he said at the OpenAI Forum. "There's no sitting around asking for permission."

Joaquin also mentioned how OpenAI's *mission* is attractive to candidates. "We're building AGI, and we're bringing it to humanity in a way that's responsible and beneficial." And he explained how it's the *people* at OpenAI who draw talent to the company. "We often say good people grow good people. And people want to work with like-minded people … people who, you know, want to jump into the deep-end and into the unknown."

Joaquin's comments came during an hourlong conversation at the OpenForum entitled: "[Careers at the Frontier: Hiring the Future at OpenAI](#)," where he discussed his own career trajectory – stints at Facebook and LinkedIn before coming to OpenAI to work on AI safety and even a three-month turn as an intern on the company's health team.

Joaquin's current role at OpenAI is Head of Recruiting, and he explained why he made the move to the post. "Although OpenAI is about 10 years old, in many ways we're only getting started now. I feel like we're at the beginning of building a company that is probably going to be generational," he said. "It became a no-brainer."

When Natalie Cone, who was moderating the conversation as head of the OpenAI Forum Community, asked him what a typical day looks like for his recruiting team, Joaquin replied, "Oh, a typical day is crazy." He explained: "We have a constantly changing environment. The goals are always changing. We can't really predict what products would be shipping long term, because the models keep getting more capable. It's very hard, then, to know how much do different teams need to grow."

But Joaquin also underscored the human aspect in talent acquisition and recruiting, even for an AI company like OpenAI. "Recruiting is humans recruiting humans," he said. "AI is not going to replace recruiters," adding: "AI can actually both make the work a lot more efficient, and actually can work very strongly in favor of candidates, too."

The OpenAI recruiting team [shared their advice](#) on how candidates can stand out when applying for roles at OpenAI.

Approximately 11,000 guests registered for this online discussion – more than any other previous OpenAI Forum event. "You basically broke the Internet," Cone said at the beginning of the talk. Joaquin later replied, "I don't think I've ever spoken in front of 11,000 people."

That, however, didn't stop him from taking out his guitar and playing a Bob Dylan song at the end of the conversation – after Joaquin discussed his passions for music, guitar play, and Dylan.

"Well, Joaquin, do you want to play a little guitar for us?" Cone asked. "Maybe the Bob Dylan?"

Joaquin – responding as a doer of things, and someone who jumps at the deep-end of the unknown – replied: "Want me to play with an out-of-tune guitar? Here, let's try." (And he played — pretty well in fact.)

This is just the beginning of the collaboration between the OpenAI Forum and OpenAI Recruiting Team. We look forward to sharing more about future opportunities to connect with the Recruiting Team.