

«BEING IN ZÜRICH IS A GOOD RECRUITING TOOL!»

Google opened its European Engineering Center in Zürich in Spring 2004. Since then the center has been growing at a rapid pace, and at the moment 40 jobs are currently available. Google improves the language-specific search engine technology in Zürich and works on other specific problems. We had the opportunity to speak to Randy Knafllic, Lead Recruiter for Engineering at Google in Zürich.



«We call ourselves Zooglers!»

Randy Knafllic, Lead Recruiter Engineering, Google Switzerland

Insight: Randy, how many people currently work in Google's European Engineering Center in Zürich?

Randy Knafllic: We are well over a 100 now in Zürich, and we're growing quite aggressively. It will be very soon that we are over 200. Zürich was the first and is the largest of Google's European development centers with other locations in London, Trondheim, Aarhus, Moscow, and Tel Aviv.

What is the reason for your research hub in Zürich?

RK: Zürich is centrally located with a great pool of talent and a very high quality of life. It's much easier to attract people here from all over Europe than to anywhere else. There are many talented engineers that are happy to stay in Europe, closer to home, and be able to do the same type of development that we're doing in the United States. In addition, we see many similarities in the labor laws to the U.S.

Do you have to convince them to come to Zürich?

RK: No, Zürich seems to be enough of a recruiting tool in itself! We've recently seen more interest in Zürich from engineers coming from the latest EU member countries as well.

What skills do you appreciate most from the people you recruit here in Switzerland?

RK: The Swiss fit our Google culture since they are so well educated and have strong interests in technology. Google offers a great opportunity for them to work on some very interesting projects. The qualifications of the Swiss are very high, even compared internationally.

And with the ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) right here in Zürich we're sure to keep in close contact.

What kind of contact is that?

RK: ETH students and graduates are great software engineers. Therefore we try to offer internships, organize and sponsor events all in an effort to exchange knowledge.

What's your opinion of Zürich's future as an IT research location?

RK: As you can see in companies like IBM, Microsoft and Google, they all are doing important research and development here in Zürich. We all see a good reason in being in Zürich; we can attract the right kind of people.

Google is well known for its special corporate culture. Is there a special Zürich Google culture?

RK: For starters, we call ourselves Zooglers and have added a lot of «Swissness» to our U.S. culture. For example, we have a special «Heidi» song inviting the Zooglers to our Friday social. Some afternoons, many engineers will take a hike to the «Uetliberg» mountain, and in winter there are our skiing trips.

This all sounds very attractive!

RK: Oh, and of course my favorite, a lunch time swim in Lake Zurich. It's only a short walk to the lake. And let's not forget the great Swiss food! Many of our Google visitors from the States are impressed by our breakfast («Müesli» and «Gipfeli»), lunch (sometimes «Spätzli» with steak), and dinner (from great local restaurants like Lily's and Hiltl). But most importantly, we have plenty of delicious Swiss chocolate throughout the office!

Thank you very much for the interview. We are looking forward to an even more dynamic Google European Engineering Center in Zürich!

ABOUT GOOGLE Google's full-cycle European Engineering Center opened in Zürich in 2004. Since then Google have been drawing talented software engineers, top programmers, and visionary computer scientists from various European countries and worldwide to join their Zürich team. Their engineers work on problems in a number of areas, including distributed systems, information retrieval, algorithms, user interface, a variety of novel search features, and scalability issues related to dealing with huge amounts of data and a rapidly increasing user base. In addition, the European Engineering Center focuses on improving Google's language-specific offerings. www.google.ch