

IBM Systems ^{MEDIA}

Cultivating Talent for IBM Z

Meet the New Faces of IBM Z and learn what the IBM Z Academic Initiative is doing to help address the mainframe skills gap.



By Troy Crutcher

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I work on the IBM Z Academic Initiative team and each day I hear similar questions. Are young folks interested in this technology? Are schools teaching the mainframe? How have other companies addressed their retiring workforce? A large percentage of my team is retirement-eligible, can you help?

Do these questions sound familiar? If so, you're in the right place! We helped some amazing clients and students to share their stories with you.

What Are Other Clients Doing?

We asked Eric King, a hiring manager, to share his experience and some of his lessons learned in onboarding talent for IBM Z. In this [video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjdDWjrPS0k&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=16\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjdDWjrPS0k&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=16), King discusses best practices for hiring new IBM Z talent and what he looks for in college graduates.

We've taken many of the tips, tricks and resources that King mentions, along with some others that we've learned along the way, to create an [Employer Resource Guide \(https://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/cgi-bin/ssialias?htmlfid=ZSL03446USEN\)](https://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/cgi-bin/ssialias?htmlfid=ZSL03446USEN).

For a much more in-depth overview of these various resources, Christy Schroeder, who you just watched in King's video, walks through these in a [video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pj9GWdRhh3E&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pj9GWdRhh3E&feature=youtu.be) of her own. She talks about ways to attract, train and retain talent, as well as the various opportunities that are available to strengthen mainframe skills.

The New Faces of IBM Z

Although I can give you facts and figures to prove that this next generation of mainframe talent exists, it's so much better for you to hear directly from them. While they're awesome and special, they're not unicorns! Let's meet a few:

Tyler Crane

Crane is a Db2 systems programmer for Bank of America. In his [New Faces of IBM Z video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms-8Wp-7UYM&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=12&t=0s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms-8Wp-7UYM&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=12&t=0s), he describes the many career options within the IBM Z mainframe space.

Luisa Martinez

Martinez works with IBM's z/OS UNIX System Services Development team. In her [New Faces of IBM Z video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdXJdKhMvKA&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=1\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdXJdKhMvKA&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=1), she describes why she wanted to learn something new and get out of her comfort zone by working on the mainframe.

Derek Powe

Powe is a senior staff specialist from M&T Bank. His passion is to learn as much as he possibly can about mainframes, from software to hardware. Learn more about Powe in his [New Faces of IBM Z video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnjFibJ4UBo&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=14\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnjFibJ4UBo&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=14).

Murilo Andrade

Andrade is a top three winner of the 2017 Master the Mainframe contest. Hear how this contest has impacted his life and his future with the mainframe in his [New Faces of IBM Z video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0FDKG5pEYw&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=12\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0FDKG5pEYw&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj&index=12).

Stephanie Reaves

Reaves is in her final year at North Carolina A&T State University. In her [New Faces of IBM Z video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tQm4jv9Exc&index=15&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tQm4jv9Exc&index=15&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj), hear how she got started on learning mainframes and how it changed her career path.

Diego Matos

Matos is a top winner from Brazil of the 2017 Master the Mainframe contest. In his [New Faces of IBM Z video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5_xuAmfgDo&index=13&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5_xuAmfgDo&index=13&list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj), hear how this contest has impacted his life and his future with the mainframe.

These are just a few examples of the great New Faces of IBM Z, but you can get to know even more new faces here (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLezLS0Tuqb-47nYbqa3yVPbSrbA9o5cVj>).

The Master the Mainframe Program

There are over 3,000 schools in over 120 countries that expose their students to mainframe technologies. Well—3,000 that we know of. From high schools, to community and technical colleges, to universities and code schools, students are learning about the mainframe.

Take a look at our [comprehensive list of schools \(https://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/cgi-bin/ssialias?htmlfid=ZSL03445USEN\)](https://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/cgi-bin/ssialias?htmlfid=ZSL03445USEN) that are currently incorporating mainframe education into their curriculum. You can also reach out directly to the professors that are teaching these skills and utilizing the [Master the Mainframe \(https://www.ibm.com/it-infrastructure/z/education/master-the-mainframe\)](https://www.ibm.com/it-infrastructure/z/education/master-the-mainframe) curriculum in the classroom.

Of course, we can always reach more students and more schools, and so we would like to ask for your help in spreading the word about the Master the Mainframe program. Here's [an activity kit \(https://www.ibm.com/ibm/responsibility/initiatives/activitykits/mainframe/\)](https://www.ibm.com/ibm/responsibility/initiatives/activitykits/mainframe/) to help you get started in your local community.

Making a Difference

I want to close by sharing some quotes that really stood out to me as I listened to the numerous [“New to Z” panel discussions \(http://bit.ly/NewMainframeTalent\)](http://bit.ly/NewMainframeTalent) over the past few years. When talking about recruiting, one early tenure mainframer said “It’s not what they don’t know, it’s what they can learn.” When we asked participants why they chose mainframes, we heard answers like “Many young professionals want a career where they can make a difference. The mainframe is a perfect fit because it’s the backbone to mission-critical IT” and “I wanted to learn something new every day.”

On this platform, you can work on networking, analytics, databases, deep programming languages, APIs and anything else in IT you can think of. That’s pretty exciting. But don’t take my word for it--take theirs!

Find out more on our [IBM Z Skills website \(https://www.ibm.com/it-infrastructure/z/education/academic\)](https://www.ibm.com/it-infrastructure/z/education/academic).

About the author

Troy Crutcher is the program manager for the Master the Mainframe Contest on the IBM Z Academic Initiative Team.