ANNA SLASTNIKOVA

Job: Software Engineer

Company: Zuhlke Engineering Ltd

I'm a software engineer at IT consultancy organisation. At Zuhlke, we tend to work in self organised, interdisciplinary teams. Also every project is different with different challenges and tech stacks and it allows us to try ourselves at different roles and contexts. Usually first we gather requirements by user story-mapping sessions, then create a backlog and prioritise it and then develop in close interaction with customers. Whenever possible we try to use test driven development.

Creative

The skills I use most in my job... Coding - with various languages and frameworks, depending on a project: mostly it's .NET, also Python, a bit of Golang

- Automated tests, CI/CD - one of the important things to ensure quality is to set up appropriate testing approach, required environments and automated CI/CD pipelines.
- Listening - I had to work on variety of projects with different needs and tech stack, so every time everything is new and I'd need to listen to understand customer's business domain and actual requirements. It's also relevant for team work so we listen to each other's ideas within the team and try not to block them.
- Team work - being able to listen to colleagues, learn from them, share knowledge
- Creativity - it does require creativity, especially when there are some constraints in the system or how to test things or when debugging

The most interesting thing I've worked on in my career so far... My favourite project was with one for a consumer data analytics company. The project was about building a microservices platform for company products as well as internal products, it also included the deployment of the services, monitoring them and providing some security hardening. The reason it stands out is cause we tried a lot of cool technologies like Google Cloud Platform and Kubernetes, as well as Infrastructure as a Code, I've enjoyed working on approaches how to test infrastructure.

What inspired me into digital and tech... Problem solving - just simple as that. I love math and Software Engineering seemed great application of Math to solve real world problems. At some point I was fascinated that it can help to solve some very important biology and medical problems. So for me it's important to know that there are people who benefit from my results of my work and now having worked with different clients it's good to know that we're helping them achieve their goals.

My educational background is...I've got Master in "Applied Math and Physics" from Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. As vague as it sounds my course did include some Computer Science like Discrete Mathematics and Programming as well as Databases which allowed me to enter into IT. But to get better position I had to take online courses as well as online coding exercises to upskill myself. My education was anyway mostly math and physics with some really boring and far from real life courses, so at some point I got particularly enthusiastic about coding when learnt there's a field of bioinformatics where it can be applicable.

What advice I'd give to girls thinking about a career in digital and tech... Tech domain is so huge and I believe there's something for anyone as it can be really about people when considering users of some application for example or even gathering requirements as well as technical and abstract. People from different backgrounds are more than welcome to Tech world as first it's about constant learning so it's possible transfer from non-tech background (I know people who got degree in Languages but eventually transferred to IT by doing coding bootcamp!) and second, it's all about team work where everyone can bring something unique and adding this all together would allow a team to create something great.