

Aprila Bank - Case Story

Aprila Bank is a B2B bank focused on startups and scale-ups.

Location:
Norway



Israr Khan

Co-founder & CTO, Aprila Bank

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It's very important for us to keep an extremely high talent density. Everyone we recruit needs to be very proficient in what they do and what they're going to work with.

Israr Khan

Co-founder & CTO | Aprila Bank

15

Developers

4

Technologies:

Microsoft .Net, C#, Azure ML,
Azure DevOps

“Working with people that are working with people requires some sort of trust and some sort of integrity”

About Aprila Bank

Aprila Bank is a B2B bank primarily focused on startups and scale-ups. Aprila was founded to address the lack of access to efficient funding for small businesses and work with highly digitalised processes with a high level of self-service and systems similar to that of the consumer side. For this interview we met with Israr Khan, Co-founder and CTO at Aprila Bank, he talks about the challenges and struggles they faced when trying to grow their tech team and hire new IT- talents. Aprila has previously been working with external consultants in various countries but after Covid, they decided to focus on growing the team in-house in Oslo, Norway.

The Challenge – Finding Tech Talent

Aprila Bank was est. in 2017 and is a small fintech bank of 30 employees, offering innovative financial solutions and loans without the hassle to small and medium-sized businesses. In October 2021 they entered a business partnership with DNB which is Norway’s largest financial services group in order to utilize Aprila’s technology infrastructure that employs machine learning models predicting outcomes and price risk automatically, using real-time data in addition to ordinary sources of credit information. They needed to grow their development team as a result, however in a market where demand for software development far out ways supply finding the right talent was proving challenging.

“As it always is, the fight for good talent is super, super hard. Especially coming out of Covid, the situation for finding tech talents that were

interested in moving to other companies, is really hard. Also, you had a period, where the inflation in salaries was running wild. We tried to find talent through our own channels, and that has worked previously, but this time it was completely dry. It was impossible to get any significant amount of good leads.”

Challenge of a dedicated team

Aprila has previously worked with software consultants in different countries in eastern Europe, and even India, Israr states that this has worked well, but after COVID they found that in order to ensure a strong company culture and maintain knowledge in-house they had to change the model and focus on development within the company in Oslo Norway. Being a small company having close proximity to all colleagues ensures that company culture and values are instilled as well as increasing efficiency.

“Probably the biggest reason for why we choose to have people hired inside of the company instead of hiring consultants externally, it’s because we really want the people that are working with us as a company to feel and breathe Aprila and we often find that to be easier when they are on our own payroll versus an external company. That said, one of the things that we’ve been looking into is if we can have branded hubs or, a hiring model, which might be based on a traditional consultancy model, but we need to have people that go to the work and feel that they are working for Aprila and not an external consultancy company.”

The Solution – Hiring with INSCALE

After spending over two months looking for developers themselves in Norway without finding qualified talent Aprila reached out to INSCALE. They had heard about the new business model “TaaS” – Talent as a Service which is a subscription-based recruitment process where the risk is shared between INSCALE and Aprila. Israr tells that they “Were looking for a senior

developer and architect in microsoft.net and C Sharp and, uh, Microsoft Technologies in general.”

“The process started off with the kickoff where we described the needs that we had for the talents we need to hire to INSCALE. And after the kickoff meeting, they, started the search, and within, a week or so they had candidates lined up in their portal that we could review. Based on, the profiles we got, we could choose which one we were interested in having an interview with.”

Identifying the Talent

“What happened was that we found talent, who was a bit different from the profile that we were originally looking for. However, this was such a great candidate that we ended up with deviating from our original plan and hiring him. We were then suddenly in a situation where we have found the guy that we were thinking of recruiting probably down the line, but we still had an unmatched need for a talent that we needed right now. So we decided that let’s find a new talent through INSCALE as well. So we started with just wanting one, during the process, we ended up hiring someone we didn’t actually expect to find, and then continued searching for a new one, which was the original profile that we were looking for. So we ended up with two guys”.

Sharing the risk

“One of the biggest risks that you usually have with using traditional business models for recruitment is that you have a high upfront cost. You also have the uncertainty regarding if we are the right place for that candidate, and also if that candidate is the right candidate for us. Those are the things you will eventually find out, and you will find it out very often, not after three months. It might take six months or even a year. And it might also be that needs change. So for instance, what we thought we needed today isn’t what we need tomorrow. And especially for a small

company like us where everything is quite dynamic, those things change. That means that having a model where we don't have this huge upfront fee, but we have a smaller fee based on how long the candidate actually stay in the company, resonates quite well with the needs."

The Result – New developers relocating to Norway

With a focus on highly technological and very skilled people, that have a passion for what they do as well as what Aprila does, INSCALE found candidates outside of Norway. The new hires are moving from Malaysia and relocating to Norway. "Initially we were looking for someone, which were locally or interested in relocating to Norway, and that was also the solution that we ended up with finding someone who were interested in moving to Norway." Aprila as a company is used to working with people from different cultures and habits and even though they find it important to have people in-house and within the same time zone they value cultural diversity and look forward to welcoming the new colleagues, Israr finishes. "Even the remote work works well, having that personal touch at least a few times, and enough times to create that cultural match so that you can apply and, assimilate the new people into the culture of the company is very important for us." I think one of the most efficient and fun ways of scaling a company is by trying to look outside of your own borders. And then there's another big benefit here, which is sort of like a social demographic experiment. And that is having the diversity in a company with many people from many cultures, many countries, it increases, the way a company is energized at least based on my experience."

Our Model

Insourcing and Scaling – in short “INSCALING”. We do strategic insourcing, delivered through an unconventional and scalable captive model. INSCALE is neither a traditional outsourcing nor body “shop” for project needs. The dedicated development team with INSCALE is an integral part of your organisation and work exclusively for you. We never share resources amongst our clients. What you see is what you get! We call our model Build, Operate and Transfer – with a transparent pricing structure.

CONTACT OUR SALES DEPARTMENT

**Scaling your business starts with
one conversation**

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