



In-Person & Culture-Fit Interviews

Check out these articles from our Blog – they'll be particularly useful for you in preparing for this step of the interview process 🦄

- [How to Win at Your Next Interview](#)
- [6 Tips to Improve the Things You Can Control in an Interview](#)
- [Finding the Right Fit: How a Great Work Environment Can Help You Excel](#)
- [Company perks and what they say about culture](#)
- [There's More to a 'Good' Job Than Just Money – Here's What I've Learnt](#)
- [How to Negotiate a Job Offer That's More Than Just the Money](#)
- [Underpaid? Here's How to Make the Most Of Your Next Salary Conversation](#)
- [The Secret Sauce of Technical Leadership](#)

We've also gathered some tips from other sources that we think are pretty cool! 🖥️

Succeeding in an engineering career involves more than just technical skills. Behavioral interviews (aka people skills) become more important as an engineer becomes more senior. Senior engineers should have the ability to lead and influence, resolve conflicts, anticipate risks, plan the roadmap, and more.

Hiring a talented engineer that cannot work with others can ultimately be a net deficit for companies. Companies don't want to hire brilliant jerks. The company is better off not hiring a very talented engineer who refuses to work with others or causes an entire team to be unproductive. Companies want to hire the right person that will work well with the existing employees and help the team and company achieve greater heights, and behavioral interviews are one way of determining if someone will be good to work with from a non-technical standpoint.

STAR Format

The STAR format is a framework to help you organize your experience into sections that flows nicely. From Wikipedia:

- Situation - The interviewer wants you to present a recent challenge and situation which you found yourself in.
- Task - What were you required to achieve? The interviewer will be looking to see what you were trying to achieve from the situation. Some performance development methods use "Target" rather than "Task". Job interview candidates who describe a "Target" they set themselves instead of an externally imposed "Task" emphasize their own intrinsic motivation to perform and to develop their performance.
- Action - What did you do? The interviewer will be looking for information on what you did, why you did it and what the alternatives were.
- Results - What was the outcome of your actions? What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your objectives? What did you learn from this experience and have you used this learning since?

Common Questions You Might be Asked

Here is an interesting article which explains what hiring managers are hoping to learn from your answers to interview questions: [40 Favorite Interview Questions from Some of the Sharpest Folks We Know](#)

Some General questions you might be asked

- Why do you want to work for X company?
- Why do you want to leave your current/last company?

- What are you looking for in your next role?
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker.
- Tell me about a time in which you had a conflict and needed to influence somebody else.
- What project are you currently working on?
- What is the most challenging aspect of your current project?
- What was the most difficult bug that you fixed in the past 6 months?
- How do you tackle challenges? Name a difficult challenge you faced while working on a project, how you overcame it, and what you learned.
- What are you excited about?
- What frustrates you?
- Imagine it is your first day here at the company. What do you want to work on? What features would you improve on?
- What are the most interesting projects you have worked on and how might they be relevant to this company's environment?
- Tell me about a time you had a disagreement with your manager.
- Talk about a project you are most passionate about, or one where you did your best work.
- What does your best day of work look like?
- What is something that you had to push for in your previous projects?
- What is the most constructive feedback you have received in your career?
- What is something you had to persevere at for multiple months?
- Tell me about a time you met a tight deadline.

Questions You Can Ask

Here are some good questions to ask at the end of the interview, extracted from various sources.

General

- What is the most important/valuable thing you have learnt from working here?
- How do your clients and customers define success?
- What would you change around here if you could?
- What are some weaknesses of the organization?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What do you think the company can improve at?
- How would you see yourself growing at this company in the next few years?
- Why did you choose to come to this company?
- Is there anything wish someone would have told you before you joined?
- What was your best moment so far at the company?

Culture

- What is unique about working at this company that you have not experienced elsewhere?

- What is something you wish were different about your job?
- How will the work I will be doing contribute to the organization's mission?
- What is your policy on working from home/remotely?
- (If the company is a startup) When was the last time you interacted with a founder? What was it regarding? Generally how involved are the founders in the day-to-day?
- Does the company culture encourage entrepreneurship? Could you give me any specific examples?

Technical

- What are the engineering challenges that the company/team is facing?
- What has been the worst technical blunder that has happened in the recent past? How did you guys deal with it? What changes were implemented afterwards to make sure it didn't happen again?
- What is the most costly technical decision made early on that the company is living with now?
- What is the most fulfilling/exciting/technically complex project that you've worked on here so far?
- I do / don't have experience in domain X. How important is this for me to be able to succeed?
- How do you evaluate new technologies? Who makes the final decisions?
- How do you know what to work on each day?
- How would you describe your engineering culture?
- How has your role changed since joining the company?
- What is your stack? What is the rationale for/story behind this specific stack?
- Do you tend to roll your own solutions more often or rely on third party tools? What's the rationale in a specific case?
- How does the engineering team balance resources between feature requests and engineering maintenance?
- What do you measure? What are your most important product metrics?
- What does the company do to nurture and train its employees?
- How often have you moved teams? What made you join the team you're on right now? If you wanted to move teams, what would need to happen?
- What resources does the company have for new hires to study its product and processes? Are there specifications, requirements, documentation?
- There's "C++" (or Python, Swift or any other tech) in the job description. How will you estimate my proficiency in this tech in 3 months?
- How do you think my expertise would be relevant to this team? What unique value can I add?

Product

- Tell me about the main products of your company.
- What is the current version of product? (If it is v1.0 or similar - there could be a lot of chaos to work with)
- What products are your main competitors?
- What makes your product competitive?
- When are you planning to provide the next release? (If in several months, it would mean a lot of requirements specified in job description are not needed right now)
- Is the team growing, and what sort of opportunities will there be in the next year/3 years?
- What are your highest priorities right now? For example, new features, new products, solidifying existing code, reducing operations overhead?

Questions to ask Managers

- How do you train/ramp up engineers who are new to the team?
- What does success look like for your team/project?
- What qualities do you look out for when hiring for this role?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current team? What is being done to improve upon the weaknesses?
- How did you become a manager?
- How do your engineers know what to work on each day?
- What is your team's biggest challenge right now?
- How do you measure individual performance?
- How often are 1:1s conducted?
- What is the current team composition like?
- What opportunities are available to switch roles? How does this work?
- Two senior team members disagree over a technical issue. How do you handle it?
- Have you managed a poor performer at some point in your career before? What did you do and how did it work?
- Where do you spend more of your time, high performers or low performers?
- What is your management philosophy?
- What is the role of data and metrics in managing a team like ours?
- What role does the manager play in making technical decisions?
- What is an example of a change you have made in the team that improved the team?
- What would be the most important problem you would want me to solve if I joined your team?
- What opportunities for growth will your team provide?
- What would I work on if I joined this team and who would I work most closely with?

Questions to ask senior-level Management, such as CEO/CTO

- How are you funded?
- Are you profitable? If no, what's your plan for becoming profitable?

- Tell me about your reporting structure.
- How does the company decide on what to work on next?

Questions to ask an HR Representative/Hiring Manager

- How do you see this position evolving in the next three years?
- Who is your ideal candidate and how can I make myself more like them?
- What concerns/reservations do you have about me for this position?
- What can I help to clarify that would make hiring me an easy decision?
- How does the management team deal with mistakes?
- If you could hire anyone to join your team, who would that be and why?
- How long does the average engineer stay at the company?
- Why have the last few people left?

Source:

<https://yangshun.github.io/tech-interview-handbook/>