

How to interview engineers to assess ability to deliver impact

Pre-interview Prep

Goal: Internalize your job in this interview

Are they impact-oriented?

How do they work/operate?

Do they seek to learn about broader context?

How impactful have they been?

Setup

Goal: Prime the candidate to go deep

“We’re going to focus on the impact you’ve had in the past.”

“Feel free to go down rabbit-holes. It’s my job to zoom out.”

“We’re aiming to get into low-level detail. So please bear with me and go with it!”

“I want to feel like I was there working alongside you on this project.”

Assessment

Open

Goal: Get the candidate to lay out the context, and learn where they naturally focus

“Can you tell me about a recent project where you are especially proud of your impact?”

Explore

Goal: Test candidate’s breadth of understanding, and identify a deep-dive area

“What was the objective?”

“Why was this important?”

“Who did it benefit?”

“What was your role? / What bits did you do?”

Transition Question - “What was the most challenging thing?”

Deep-dive

Goal: Learn how the candidate works

“How did you overcome it?”

“How did the stakeholders react?”

“Did you meet? Or send an email? Something else?”

“How did you decide to take that approach?”

“What happened next?”

“What was the outcome?”

“How did you communicate that decision?”

Close

Goal: Learn why this was important to the candidate

“Thanks for bearing with me and going into all those details. Final question from me: What was it about this project that you think motivated you to do your most impactful work?”