

Interview Questions

David Knapick

September 20, 2016

Note: For resume reviews or any additional questions, feel free to email me at: david.p.knapick@nasa.gov

1 Interviewing Overview

- Remember, the phone interview is just the beginning – your goal is to get an in-person interview. It is meant to be a screening.
- Be prepared for the call to come early or even late. Usually start right on time.
- Skype interviews are also used instead of flying a person down to the company.
- Know your resume cold!! Never lie. They will get you.
- A company wants to make sure a person is the best for the position and also how well they will fit in on the team. You may ace the technical skills, but lack the personality they are looking for.
- Therefore, your personality is key!! Even on a phone interview!
- Know your starting salary. It may come up in the first interview. Be aware of cost of living is higher in certain areas. Look up your major's average starting salary with a B.S.
- Do not mention you are applying to grad schools as well. They will think you are not serious and may not move you onto the next round.
- Applying to jobs are free unlike grad school! Therefore, apply to a lot!!
- May have a better chance with smaller companies. Large companies have coding scripts that automatically compare your resume with key words. Your resume may never make it to an actual person!
- Do not be intimidated! The interviewer may say "I am going to ask you some difficult questions." If so, sound excited.
- They will ask questions to see how fast you can think on the spot
- A SIMPLE TYPO ON YOUR RESSUME COULD COST YOU THE JOB

2 Phone Interview

- Stand up when speaking on the phone-it helps your voice sound more natural and authentic
- Speak slowly and clearly
- You may have papers in front of you with notes, but make sure they do not become a distraction (Don't be shuffling through them)
- Look up the person you will be talking to on LinkedIn if possible (Put a name and voice with an image of a person).
- Show excitement and enthusiasm. Show that you have a personality and will be able to get along working on a team.

3 Interview Questions

1. What was your favorite class?
2. Describe a stressful situation. How did you overcome it?
3. Why did you chose your major?
4. Why is your GPA only x ? (Usually if below a 3.5)
5. **Why should we hire you?**
6. How would your friends describe you?
7. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
8. What exactly are your interests?
9. What is your desired salary?
10. Describe a time when you were creative
11. What programming languages do you know?
12. How did you learn them?
13. From your resume, describe your research experiences, but get very technical (Key theorems/principles)
14. Describe yourself
15. Do you prefer to work alone or with others?
16. What was your role when working on a team project?
17. How do you handle when one of your team members doesn't want to pull their own weight?
18. What motivates you when doing an assignment you do not find interesting
19. Are you willing to work weekends if needed?
20. You are given a task that is due in 2 weeks, how do you approach it?
21. When you do not know something, at what point do you seek help?
22. How would you tell your boss information that he/she does not want to hear? (criticizing information)
23. How did you go from Physics to x (Astrodynamics, Astronomy, Engineering...)
24. Do you prefer to work with a solution and work to make it better or create a solution on your own? (Don't be afraid to say both, but back up your reasoning. i.e. Take home tests in class x prepared me to create my own solution or during research I improved the algorithm from professor x .)
25. Do you prefer to contact people through email or in person?
26. Are you a good at public speaking? (Support this with talks you have given at a conference)
27. What is generally your role on a team project? Listening, assigning tasks?
28. When assigned a task, do you prefer to work with others on it immediately, or take it back to your desk and look at it?
29. Take me through your resume
30. What has been your greatest accomplishment?
31. What are your strengths/weaknesses?

4 Your Turn to Ask Questions

At the end of the interview, the interviewer will always ask if you have any questions. You should always have a handful to ask. NOT ASKING AN INSIGHTFUL QUESTION COULD COST YOU THE JOB!

1. What are the next steps?
2. When will I hear back?
3. What is your favorite part about company x
4. Where do you see the company in 5 *years*?
5. What is a typical day like?
6. How big is the team I will be part of?
7. Where will I primarily be working?
8. Is there any required travel?
9. What projects are you currently working on?

5 After The Interview

- Be sure to thank the interviewer!!
- Within 24hrs, send a thank you email
- Don't be shy to send a follow-up email in a couple weeks if you do not hear back. Also shows you are interested in the company.

6 Additional Information

- Use classes to your advantage. i.e You were 1 of x students who took Quantum Mechanics. It was an optional class, but I wanted to take it.
- They like to see that you are willing to challenge yourself
- Use your major to your advantage. i.e. Physics taught me how to think critically and develop new problem solving strategies.
- Physics taught me that it is good to struggle, but there comes a time to seek help.
- Not answering the phone for your scheduled phone interview will cost you the job
- Some employer's will purposely say a wrong statement to see if 1) you catch it and 2) you correct the interviewer. (You should politely correct the interviewer)
- Example. Why is an inclination only maneuver performed at apogee? Correct answer: This type of maneuver is only performed at one of the nodes.
- The purpose of this question is that sometimes you may have to tell a customer that he/she is wrong

7 Social Media

- Yes, it is true that your employer will look you up on social media
- Make sure your fb pictures are all private.
- Avoid posting any public pictures that can create a negative image of you (drinking)
- Google your name. Is there anything you wouldn't want your employer to see?