Elevator pitch

I have diverse experience ranging from HVAC to helicopter mechanics, from landscaping to sales. This experience has given me a variety of skills that can translate to the world of software development, such as diagnosing and solving problems, documenting problems and solutions, and working with and fulfilling the needs of customers. In particular, I am proud of my experience in sales. I sold solar power systems that were in the price range of $20,000 to $100,000. It was a difficult line of work, but I loved working with people and with my team, which I consistently led in number of monthly sales. Since I have been in this field, I have discovered a new passion and purpose. A fire has been lit and I work hard to stoke it through increasing my skillset, gaining experience in various coding languages and learning new ways to write cleaner code. Likewise, it has brought out the creativity I knew I had somewhere deep down inside and showed me how much I love working with a team. I feel that working as part of your team will be mutually beneficial, enabling me to reach my goal to be a quality full stack developer while allowing me to help give your customers the best possible experience through a quality product and a friendly connection within the company.

Five behavioral questions

1. Describe a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone important. How did you eventually overcome that?

* In one of my previous jobs, I had a manager that I didn’t connect with very well. Our conversations were mostly just small talk, surface level type conversation. I knew that I couldn’t enjoy that job and succeed like I wanted to without a better relationship with him. During this time, I was also going through a lot of family emergencies. I pulled him aside and was completely honest and transparent with him, telling him about how my wife had just had a miscarriage and how it was affecting my work. It was pretty amazing because he was transparent right back and told me how his wife had a miscarriage some years back. It helped him to understand me better and I saw him differently.

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* When I was working in sales, I had a customer that was interested in getting solar put on his home. I went and visited him and his wife, walking them through what the entire process would look like. They had a lot of common questions, questions that are big concerns for a lot of people. I helped them to answer each of their questions and they were really excited to move forward with the process. We got all of the paperwork signed and all was well. Later that night, they reached out and were really concerned about something they had found in the contract. To ensure their peace of mind, I went over the next day, a Saturday morning, and explained the contract in more detail. Because I was willing to help in any way I could, I built trust and delivered a great product.

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* I worked for a company called Fluent Solar as a sales rep. The Boise team was made up of about five reps, including a team manager. Additionally, the team had a regional manager that we learned a lot from. He was an excellent manager and consistently gave us something to strive for. Without much notice, though, he suddenly quit one day. It really took us all by surprise and we had to adjust to being a part of a new region and work with a new regional manager who had a very different style. Because of this change, other changes within the company rippled out from it. I knew I had to step up and put my best foot forward in a new way. I went on to lead the Boise team in sales.

1. Sometimes it’s just not possible to get everything on your to-do list done. Tell me about a time your responsibilities got a little overwhelming. What did you do?

* As a records compliance administrator, I was tasked with a lot of recurring responsibilities, some of which were big. For example, I was responsible for responding to customer questions and audit requests, running the calibration program, and digitizing the workflow documents, among other things. Often times, I would get a big batch of documents, tools for calibration, and audits all at the same time. I created a schedule and documentation that would track when some of these more common assignments would need to be completed, allowing me to prepare in advance. Additionally, I timeboxed my day to maximize my efficiency.

1. Give me an example of a time when you had to explain something fairly complex to a frustrated client. How did you handle this delicate situation?

* This was a common occurrence when I was in the HVAC industry because it’s always surprising how expensive a furnace or air conditioner is to repair. I remember one particular case where I was on call and went out to help a customer with a furnace blower that wasn’t working. When I arrived and diagnosed the problem, I found that parts required to repair the furnace were no longer available. Nobody wants to hear that, especially on a weekend. I helped the customer come up with some ideas to be more comfortable for the time being, gave them options on replacements, and set them up with a salesman. In the end, the customer understood the situation and grateful for my efforts. It turned a bad situation into a bearable one.

Five questions to ask interviewer

1. What would success look like in the first 90 days?
2. What’s the most challenging aspect of the role?
3. How would you describe your management style?
4. What are you hoping I’d accomplish in the first year here?
5. How often do you promote people internally?

Whiteboard challenges

I did two whiteboard Wednesdays. Both were group challenges, the first being battleship and the second being the famous Santa challenges. I was surprised at my ability to see the answers unfold as I participated passively (not the one writing), but I want to get more practice one on one and being the one writing. Tristan and I plan on doing some together.

Interview prep

From what I have learned over the last few weeks, I need to do my research on the companies I apply for. I have done this before, but never in depth. I will need to know their mission, their products and services, etc. I will also look through more interview questions and prepare possibly experiences to share.