

This was a question I had on an interview with FB on 1/16/14 with John Maier.

- You have 100 marbles, 1/2 are red, and the other 1/2 are blue.
- Place the balls in 2 bags such that you maximize the probability of picking a blue ball.
- Assume the probability of picking each bag is the same

$$P(\text{blue}) = P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag1})P(\text{bag1}) + P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag2})P(\text{bag2})$$

$$= \frac{1}{2 \times [P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag1}) + P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag2})]} \text{ So we want to maximize } P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag1}) + P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag2})$$

Caution: Don't assume you have the same number of balls in each bag! define

b = number of blue balls in bag 1

r = number of red balls in bag 1

$$P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag1}) = \frac{b}{b + r} \quad P(\text{blue} \mid \text{bag2}) = \frac{50-b}{(50-b) + (50-r)}$$