Walmart
Senior Software Engineer | L4
Interview Experience

Summary

- 📌 **Job Role**: Java Backend Engineer
- 🔢 **Number of Rounds**: 5
- 📜 **Offer Status:** Pending
- 📍 **Location**: Bangalore
- 👤 **Candidate Name:** Not disclosing due to signed NDA

Interview Process:

The interview process at Walmart Labs consisted of 5 rounds:
1. Problem solving and DS-Algo round (1 hour)
2. Problem solving and Java interview (1 hour)
3. Hiring Manager round (1 hour 45 mins)
4. Sr. Director round (15 mins)
5. Senior Talent Acquisition Member round (15 mins)

After completing all the rounds, I was asked to share all relevant documents. The Sr. TA member informed me that they would get back to me by the end of the week after completing internal discussions and debriefing calls. However, it has been over 3 weeks since the last round and I have not received any updates. The experience overall was highly unprofessional and disappointing, especially given the scale and reputation of the company. They asked for sensitive documents, giving an impression of positive progression, but there has been complete silence since then. This has been one of the worst interview experiences I have had so far.

Preparation Guide

I did not follow a specific preparation strategy for this interview. Given my experience of 6.7 years, I relied on my day-to-day work exposure to problem-solving and backend design using Java. The focus was to keep fundamentals strong, especially around Java internals, object-oriented design, and system-level thinking. That said, brushing up on key data structures, algorithms, and core Java concepts definitely helped.

Round 1 – DS and Algo

- **Duration**: 60 minutes
- **Difficulty Level**: Medium
- **Experience:**
- This round primarily focused on fundamental problem-solving and data structures. I was asked to code out three problems and discuss the time/space complexity as well as edge case handling.
- LRU Cache Implementation – I was asked to implement an LRU cache using an optimal data structure choice, with a clear explanation of operations and performance implications.
- Minimum Cost Path in a Matrix (0,0) to (row-1, col-1) – A standard DP problem, but the interviewer was interested in both recursive and iterative approaches.
- Cycle Detection in a Linked List – I was expected to implement Floyd's cycle detection algorithm and explain its working in detail.
- The interviewer was moderately interactive and nudged in the right direction when necessary.
- **Key Learnings:**
- It's important to clarify problem requirements up front, especially around expected input sizes and constraints.
- Revisiting standard DP and LL-based problems before the interview can help with both speed and confidence.

Round 2 – Problem solving and Java interview

- **Duration**: 60 minutes
- **Difficulty Level**: Medium

- **Experience**:
- This round was a hybrid between coding and deep-dive discussions on Java internals.
- Clone Linked List with Random Pointer – I was asked to implement it using multiple approaches, including in-place manipulation and using auxiliary data structures.
- HashMap Internals – In-depth questions on how HashMap works, its resizing mechanism, and collision resolution strategies.
- Equals and HashCode Contract – I had to explain why they are critical in collections and how to properly override them.
- Hash Functions – A detailed theoretical discussion about how hash functions are chosen and evaluated.
- Deep Copy vs Shallow Copy – Real-world example-based discussion to evaluate understanding beyond definitions.
- The interviewer was very thorough and probed continuously to assess depth of knowledge.

Round 2 – Problem solving and Java interview

- **Key Learnings:**
- Revising source code of core Java classes like HashMap, ArrayList, etc., can significantly improve confidence in such rounds.
- Understanding object behavior in Java and how memory is managed helps answer non-trivial questions effectively.

Round 3 – Manager Interview

- **Duration**: 1 hour 45 minutes
- **Difficulty Level**: Medium

- **Experience:**
- This was a long and comprehensive discussion with the Hiring Manager, with a strong emphasis on behavioral, motivational, and architectural aspects.
- Started with an overview of the team's work and expectations.
- Discussed in depth why I was considering Walmart Labs and what my motivations were for a job change.
- Talked about my long-term career goals and how Walmart fits into them.
- I was asked what my contributions would look like in the first year after joining.
- I had to explain the PageRank algorithm as if I were teaching an eight-year-old, which was an interesting challenge.
- Another unique question was to teach the interviewer something new in 4 minutes. I chose to explain how JVM optimizations work at runtime.

Round 3 – Manager Interview

- We also discussed how I approach unfamiliar problems and my methodology when I encounter blockers.
- Lastly, the HM explained his team structure and asked what technical and process changes I would recommend if I joined.
- It was an engaging round and gave me a clear sense of the team's maturity and expectations.

- **Key Learnings:**
- Be ready for abstract questions that test your ability to communicate clearly and think on your feet.
- Managerial rounds are not just about culture fit but also how you perceive your role in a broader tech ecosystem.

Round 4 – Director Round

- **Duration**: 15 minutes
- **Difficulty Level**: Easy
- **Experience:**

- A brief but formal interaction with the Sr. Director.
- I was asked again why I was looking to move out of my current organization.
- The director wanted feedback on the hiring experience.
- Discussed what my 1-year roadmap would look like post joining Walmart.
- The interaction was more of a checkbox discussion, mostly focused on vision alignment and culture fit.

- **Key Learnings:**
- This round seemed more of a validation than an evaluative discussion. Keeping answers crisp but thoughtful helps.

Round 4 – HR Round

- **Duration**: 15 minutes
- **Difficulty Level:** Easy

- **Experience:**
- This was the final round and primarily around HR logistics.
- Discussion around current compensation and any offers in hand.
- Notice period, expected salary, and availability were also discussed.
- I was asked to share all relevant documents including payslips, ID proofs, and other details.
- I was informed that after internal discussions and debriefs, they would respond by the end of the week. However, despite repeated follow-ups, there has been no communication from the team.

- **Key Learnings:**
- Ensure you're cautious about sharing confidential documents before getting any formal written offer or intent.
- Lack of communication post multiple rounds and documentation sharing reflects poorly on the company's process.

Final Thoughts:

This interview process was exhaustive, touching upon various areas from core DSA to system design, Java internals, and behavioral competencies. However, the post-interview experience was extremely poor. Despite investing considerable time across five rounds and submitting personal documentation, the company has gone silent for over three weeks.

Takeaways for Future Candidates:

- Walmart Labs has a deep and structured interview process, but the post-interview handling leaves much to be desired.
- Be mindful of sharing documents unless there is clear intent and commitment from the other side.
- Always follow up professionally, but know when to move on if there's a lack of respect or communication.

Thank You

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