Tech Lead

A Tech Lead provides hands-on technical leadership for a team, ensuring high-quality engineering delivery, good lifecycle practices, and alignment with product and architectural direction. Combines strong technical execution with team coordination and coaching.

Candidates should use the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result). This assessment is about demonstrated experience, not theoretical understanding.

A - Technical Ownership

00:10 *- SFIA ARCH Level 4–5 / SLEN Level 5*

Owning the health, design, and evolution of the services the team delivers, ensuring systems meet functional and operational objectives.

What to look for:

- Took ownership of one or more services, features, or subsystems end-to-end
- Made technical decisions balancing trade-offs (scope, risk, operability, performance)
- Ensured systems meet appropriate lifecycle standards (reliability, security, observability, maintainability)
- Partnered with architects/Principal Engineers to align technical plans with wider platform architecture
- Ensured technical debt, incidents, and constraints were surfaced and resolved proactively
- Drove architectural improvements within team's scope without needing escalation
- Demonstrated sound judgment on when to refactor versus when to ship pragmatically
- Maintained clear understanding of system dependencies and integration points

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B - Engineering Quality

00:15 *- SFIA PROG Level 4–5 / DATM Level 4–5 / SLEN Level 5*

Maintaining broad engineering capability across software, data, and platform, and ensuring the team follows modern engineering best practices.

What to look for:

- Sets or maintains coding standards, review quality, testing discipline, and development workflows
- Demonstrates solid engineering breadth (backend, integration, data flows, CI/CD, cloud fundamentals)
- Drives improvements in quality, performance, security, reliability, or operational readiness
- Ensures traceability, observability, and robust monitoring exist for services
- Leads or contributes meaningfully to refactoring, migrations, or lifecycle improvements
- Champions automated testing and quality gates appropriate to the team's context
- Applies data handling best practices (data quality, retention, privacy, lineage)
- Stays current with relevant technologies and evaluates their applicability to team's needs

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C - Delivery Leadership

00:20 *- SFIA POMG Level 4–5 / SLEN Level 5*

Guiding the team through planning, sequencing, and delivering work predictably while managing dependencies and risks.

What to look for:

- Helps plan, break down, and sequence work into well-understood deliverables
- Manages dependencies and removes blockers to maintain flow
- Ensures the team delivers increments aligned to readiness and quality criteria
- Collaborates effectively with Product, QA, SRE, and other engineering teams
- Shows awareness of capacity, velocity, constraints, and delivery risk

- Balances delivery pressure with sustainable pace and technical quality
- Identifies and escalates delivery risks early rather than letting them become crises
- Adapts plans based on feedback, changing requirements, or technical discoveries

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D - Team Leadership

00:25 *- SFIA METL Level 4–5 / PDSV Level 4–5 / RLMT Level 4–5*

Supporting teammates, improving capability, and facilitating collaboration through coaching and enabling professional development.

What to look for:

- Supports developers through pairing, coaching, constructive code reviews, and technical guidance
- Helps team members grow in confidence, independence, and quality of output
- Encourages healthy engineering practices (documentation, design discussion, experimentation)
- Works effectively with cross-functional teams, diffusing conflict and aligning perspectives
- Creates a positive team environment that promotes learning and accountability
- Provides actionable feedback that helps engineers improve their craft
- Recognizes when to delegate versus when to demonstrate through hands-on work
- Identifies knowledge gaps in the team and helps address them

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E - Communication, Decision-Making & Influence

00:30 *- SFIA RLMT Level 4–5*

Communicating technical matters clearly and influencing decisions through stakeholder engagement and structured communication.

What to look for:

- Communicates technical decisions clearly to engineers, product managers, and business stakeholders
- Explains reasoning, risks, and impacts in structured, concise ways
- Manages disagreements or trade-offs professionally (scope limits, deadlines, tech debt)
- Gains alignment without escalation or authority-based control
- Ensures stakeholders understand constraints, delivery challenges, and technical implications
- Adapts communication style to audience (engineers vs. product vs. leadership)
- Builds trust through transparency about what’s possible and what’s risky
- Facilitates technical discussions that lead to clear decisions and shared understanding

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Scoring Matrix

Thresholds: *18+* is a pass

Competency	1	2	3	4	5
A - Technical Ownership					
B - Engineering Quality					
C - Delivery Leadership					
D - Team Leadership					
E - Communication, Decision-Making & Influence					