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Job Interviews

Linkedin ML Engineer Onsite

A Anonymous
Jun 24

I have an onsite interview at LinkedIn for the Senior Software Engineer- Machine Learning role.

I am a data scientist with 4.5 YOE and a PhD (not CS). I build ML systems in Python But I have never been a software engineer.

LinkedIn Machine Learning Onsite Interview

Questions

1. What would the interview rounds be comprised of? What kind of questions should I expect and how should I prepare?
100 words minimum.

2 Answers

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1. What would the interview rounds be comprised of? What kind of questions should I expect and how should I prepare?



The onsite interview is usually composed of 5 rounds plus lunch(which will be considered in the interview feedback). One round is about machine learning fundamentals. You need be familiar with basic ML algorithms, for example, logistic regression, random forest, GBDT, etc. Sometimes you may be asked to derived the formula, for example, the loss function for logistic regression. You need to understand how to know if there is overfitting and how to handle overfitting, and how to evaluate your models, etc. Another round is coding and I suggest you practice using leetcode and especially the problems tagged with Linkedin. One round will focus on product design, which is open ended. You will be asked to design a ML solution for a problem the interviewer gives. For example, design an algorithm to recommend friends. You need to communicate well to understand what the interviewer really want. One round will be behavior questions, which is the same as other companies. One round is about data coding, which is also coding but is related to data. You may be asked about a probability question and try to solve it and then code it out.

A Anonymous ★★★★★

Decent overview.

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1. What would the interview rounds be comprised of? What kind of questions should I expect and how should I prepare?

The onsite for senior SWE specializing in Machine Learning consists of 5 hour-long interviews plus a lunch round, which is not a formal interview but your lunch buddy will give feedback.

The 5 hour-long technical rounds are as follows:

- one coding and algorithms module
- one data coding module
- one data mining module (can be information retrieval or machine learning)
- one data mining product design
- one behavioral interview with your host manager

Note that these rounds can be in any order.

For the coding and algorithms round, it consists of whiteboard coding. The focus of this interview should be on the modularity and extensibility of the code that your write, as well as on finding and fixing bugs and other errors. Many of these sessions involve pointers, edge cases, abstraction, the above, and are intended to imitate the kind of day-to-day coding that happens once the design and implementation strategy for a project has settled on.

You may be asked one or two problems. Leetcode.com is a good online website to practice your coding skills. You probably want to do a few mock interviews on the whiteboard, ideally in front of a friend who can evaluate your performance and provide constructive feedback.

The data coding round is similar to the coding and algorithms round, but the question will emphasize machine learning, statistics, or something that involves working with data. This data programming module is intended to assess your fluency in translating data analytics ideas such as sampling, summarization, and visualization into code. You will be asked to implement one such idea, and based on your experience, you may also be asked to extend your implementation to a distributed computing environment. Like the other Coding module, the questions are algorithmically simple with an emphasis on implementation. The solutions to the questions require at least 10 lines of code.

The data mining round varies a bit depending on your interviewer(s). But generally expected an in-depth probe of your machine learning knowledge. You won't need to do any actual whiteboard coding, but you may be asked to write a few formulas, draw a few diagrams, etc. Essentially it will be a discussion about one or more ML algorithms/models, or features common to LinkedIn's ecosystem. They will ask you to briefly describe (general high level ideas) a few machine learning models (logistic regression, tree models, Bayesian models, neural networks, etc.), then describe in which situations these machine learning methods could be good to use. They may then pick a model to dig deeper (objective functions, inference algorithm, etc), ask you to debug it, and possibly check your basic knowledge/experience on training the model in distributed fashion.

The data mining product design round is meant to assess your ability to translate their data mining knowledge into a viable solution for solving a real world data product problem. It will be an open-ended question to evaluate your creativity with data, analytical skills, and/or machine learning, as well as your practical problem solving and technical communication. It is very important to understand the details of your proposed approach. For example, you may be asked to implement the skills function or the jobs recommendation system on LinkedIn.

The behavioral/host manager round is a familiar typical behavioral interview round. He/she will be asking you about your career history, your job search (why you're looking, why is LinkedIn interesting, what technologies are you interested in), and an overview of interesting projects you worked on, and your involvement in these projects. They will also evaluate your thinking and problem solving abilities: how do you figure out problems, develop solutions and alternatives, what is your decision-making process, your organizational fit, and your motivations. You want to also prepare questions to ask the manager in this round.

Lastly, there is a lunch round. The conversation will be driven by questions that you might have about LinkedIn and the different projects we are working on. This engineer does provide feedback to our hiring committee, as you are asking questions, engaging in conversation, and showing a passion/interest in LinkedIn. Types of questions you are free to ask about are things like about our engineering projects, work-life balance, company culture, etc. Think about what it is that you're currently passionate about with your current job or what you have been passionate about in the past with your current company and be clear as to why you feel LinkedIn is a company you'd like to work for.

Hopefully this provides you with a good sense of what your onsite will be like. Best of luck!



Thank you! The answer is really thorough and helpful. Very satisfied.

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