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Job Interviews

Google SWE Interview Tips

P   ptuU71
     May 11

Any tips would be appreciated.

SWE   Google   Interview

Questions

1. Compared to SWE interviews at other tech companies, what do Google expect and want to find out from interviewees?

   30 words minimum.

2. What are the top 3 things one can do to prepare for SWE interviews at Google?

   50 words minimum.

1 Answer

E   eDLd31   Google
     May 12   + Ask

1. Compared to SWE interviews at other tech companies, what do Google expect and want to find out from interviewees?

For a typical SWE interview at Google, I would think that the format is almost no different from that of other companies. However the rating criteria is different. Google uses a few clear criteria that I will describe here in a general way:

1. Coding skills - This is a catch-all criteria to see how well the candidate can code. You want to write good quality code with nice formatting and appropriate variable names. Just think about how you feel if you interview a candidate who writes messy code. Even though you might want to excuse yourself thinking that this is just an interview and you are not writing real code that will be executed, you want to treat all the code you write with the utmost care and quality. Using appropriate variable names is a big one. I see many candidates do poorly in this respect. For example, you should name your method to describe what it will do, and not use a generic, almost meaningless name like ""parse()"". I will not go into the details here so please get help and advice from someone else as needed.

2. Coding speed - The interviews are artificial and time-constrained, so you will need to write code as quickly as possible. In Google, you could choose to write your code either on the whiteboard, or on a Chromebook. Please be smart about this and always choose to use the Chromebook. Why is this so? Because when you want to make changes to your code (e.g. move lines), it is much much quicker to do it in a Chromebook than on a whiteboard. Using either option will not earn you any bonus points or dock off any points. The end result is that the interviewer will transcribe all your code into his/her interview feedback, and in almost all cases, there will be no mention of whether you used the whiteboard or the Chromebook. If you do get stuck, please ask for help, instead of wasting precious time.

3. Testing your code - Note that you will always want to test your code to see if it works or not, without waiting for the interviewer to ask you to do it. The Google interview is not a matter of the interviewer asking you to do something, and then you just perform the task blindly. You have to test your code, even if minimally, because if you don't do that, points will be deducted.

4. Communicate well - Pay attention to the way you speak and make sure the interviewer can understand you. This does not mean you should talk non-stop, no, please don't do that. Rather, you should ask good clarifying questions, resolve ambiguities, and reiterate your understanding of the problem and the approach in a clear way so that the interviewer feels good that you will write the correct code. Also please do not write your code in total silence. It will feel awkward and that will not earn you any points.

5. Googleyness and Leadership interview questions - Google online to find out what this means and prepare for this. In general, the higher the level you are interviewing for, the more important it is for you to do well in this category of questioning.

The above is by no means an exhaustive list, but these are some of the most important points to note for a Google interview.

2. What are the top 3 things one can do to prepare for SWE interviews at Google?

1. Practice coding questions (i.e. leetcoding) - Try to tackle the medium to hard questions that are not so weird that no one will ask them.

2. Mock interviews - This is generally hard to do, but if you could do a few mock interviews, these will certainly be helpful. Note that the intervie format and expectations from other companies are somewhat different, but the general gist will be the same.

3. Interview other people - If you get the opportunity, do interview other people because that will give you the experience of being the interviewer, and this will help you to understand your interviewer during your own interviews!"

P   ptuU71 ★★★★★

I appreciate your help :)

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