

Interview Process: Ramp Up

Now that we have our foundations, the next steps are connecting with target companies. Our goals for this section are the following:

- Identify a list of target companies based on narrative
- Craft a resume which communicates relevant signal for your target level
- Start the interview process at target companies through referrals, reach-outs, or direct applications

In addition we recommend you create two more things:

Status document (external)

This is where you list the companies in your funnel, what stage you are at with each, and your current todos. We recommend you use something like Dropbox Paper or Google Docs so you can share this document with your community. This will help you stay on top of things and provide visibility to your team. It can be intimidating to share, but the support you receive will be worth it.

Progress document (internal)

This is where you record your progress throughout the job search. It will include links to your code solutions, performance on interviews, and impressions of companies. Keeping notes about your impressions will be helpful in the choosing process. Furthermore, building a bank of practice questions, real questions, and personal observations will be useful for future interview cycles. At the end of your job search you can synthesize this document into a list of take-aways.

Let's dive in deeper.

Identify Target Companies

Based on your **narrative** defined earlier, come up with a list of 10-15 companies you want to meet. There will be some companies that are more interesting to you than others. Bucket the list into two groups – back-ups and top choices. Going forward, schedule interviews such that you interview with your back-ups first and then your top choices. This way you can get some real practice before speaking with your dream companies. Real practice is useful in all stages:

- Recruiter calls: You will be comfortable explaining your expectations and dealing with push-back
- Technical screens: You will be acclimated to the live interview jitters and have time to correct issues from earlier screens

- Onsites: You will be used to the full-day loop and polished any/all weak spots in different interview types
- Offer stage: By having offer talks with back-up companies first, you will be prepped for push-back and able to respond in a firm yet classy way.

Timing is key.

Craft a resume

Your resume can play a huge role in determining your level. If you have 4-5 years experience you may be a borderline candidate for L4/L5. If you want the senior level, your resume needs to convey L5 signal. This will help ensure your recruiter designs an L5 interview loop for you. Similarly, this will make your case stronger for the hiring committee. Refer back to **Signal** and **Leveling** and see some example resumes attached in this module.

Get noticed

Referrals are the best way to get into the recruiting process. Most companies want and prioritize referrals – so much so that they offer 5-10k bonuses to employees. Identify people you know from your target list of companies and reach out. They will most likely be happy to help. If you're unsure of who you know, go to LinkedIn and search for people who work at your target companies – LinkedIn will show you closest connections first.

If you don't know anyone currently at the company, look at 2nd connections who work at the company and the mutual friends you two share. You can ask your friend how close their relationship is with that person. If they have a good relationship, your friend can pass along your resume to them. This is another good way in.

If you absolutely can't think of a way to get a referral, feel free to send in a direct application. You can certainly get noticed this way. In our experience referrals are truly the best way to go. Of the 20+ onsite we did, every single loop was initiated through a referral of some kind.

Homework

- Create a list of 10-15 companies you want to meet. Bucket this list into two groups: back-ups and top choices
- Craft a resume conveying signal for your target level. Have friends look over it.
- Reach out to your network and get referrals. Send direct applications as a last resort

- Create an external status document and an internal progress document for tracking your job search.