Interview Prep Guide

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tl;dr

- This is aimed at mid-career engineers (4-6 YoE) who have enough experience to get an interview, but their interview abilities have atrophied.
- You have to develop and keep skills sharp to move up and stay on top of the talent pyramid. So you need to be a part of organizations that develop and keep skills sharp.
- Interview success doesn't correlate with job success, but to get jobs that will help you succeed, you need to be successful at the interview.
- Aim to interview (real or mock: Interviewing.io, MeetAPro) every 2-3 months to gauge your progress.
- Overall how you should focus your efforts
  - **40% Technical stories:** Technical ability is expected after working in tech for a while. You need to be able to sell yourself and your career highlights. Know the STAR answer format: Amazon STAR Method and keep answers short to allow time for follow-up questions.
  - **25% NeetCode:**
    - Use 15 mins to make a pseudo solution, then another 15 minutes to compare yours with the actual solution and your test understanding.
    - Review two problems from the previous day, then work through two new problems.
    - Use LLMs to confirm understandings and know if you're on track.
    - Review videos for long form content of concepts you're having trouble with
      - Algorithms - Abdul Bari - YouTube
      - Data Structures and Algorithms - CS Dojo - YouTube
      - Data structures playlist - WilliamFiset- YouTube
  - **25% System design:**
    - Same for coding problems, but because of how large the problems can be, give yourself 30 minutes and only aim for one review and one new problem a day.
    - System Design Playlist - Gaurav Sen - YouTube
    - ByteByteGo
      - System Design Fundamentals - YouTube
      - System Design Interview - YouTube
    - I Got An Offer
      - Google system design interviews - YouTube
      - System design mock interviews - YouTube
  - **10% behavioral questions:** Similar to technical stories, but this more about being aware and ready to them as needed i.e. "Tell me about a time".
    - Write out answers common questions and get feedback
      - Rock the Behavioral Interview (LeetCode)
      - The 30 most common Software Engineer behavioral interview questions
      - Interview Warmup - Grow with Google
    - Record yourself answering the questions based on feedback

- ■ Listen to yourself answering the questions the night before interviewing
- ■ Have reverse questions ready for when you're asked: viraptor/reverse-interview

Applying

Job Search Queries

- ● Use auto fill when possible: JobFill
- ● Google
  - ○ site:lever.co | site:greenhouse.io | site:level.co | site:dover.com "<position title>"
  - ○ Tools > Time > Past 24 hours or Past week
- ● LinkedIn
  - ● Search for "we're hiring" or "dm for referral."
  - ● Ask: "Hey! I came across your post for referrals at (COMPANY). My experiences and skills in (XYZ) would be a great fit. I'd love to connect and be referred!"

LinkedIn Direct Messages

- ● Get LinkedIn premium
  - ○ Ask someone that works there for a free 6 month premium pass
  - ○ Buy it
- ● Update your profile
  - ■ Add a nice headshot
  - ■ Add an attractive but neutral banner
  - ■ Add relevant skills
  - ■ Update positions
- ● Templates
  - ■ Hiring manager
    - ● Hey <name>, I'm interested in an open role in <company> with <product/team>. I am a <title and YoE> with <technology experience>. I'd love to connect and share about how I could contribute.
  - ■ Referral
    - ● Hey <name>, hope you're doing well. I'm a <title and YoE> looking to apply at <company>. Would you be willing to look at my resume or refer me? Thanks!
  - ■ Linkedin Inmail
    - ● Hey <name>, Thanks for connecting. I'm interested in the open role at <company> for <position> in <location>. Based on my <title and experience> I believe I'm a good fit for this role. I have

<technology experience>. Could you look at my resume or connect with me and others to discuss the position more? I'd love to learn about the team and share about how I could contribute. Looking forward to hearing from you.
Best, <name>

- ○ On the call
  - ■ Have simple time ranges: Mon-Fri 1p-4p
  - ■ Make it easier to sync schedules [Online Appointment Scheduling with Google Calendar](#)
  - ■ Keep it conversational with 2 - 3 prepared topics
- ○ Without LinkedIn premium
  - ■ Go to the LinkedIn profile of the person you want to reach
  - ■ Scroll down to "Interests" and click on "Groups"
  - ■ Join a group they're a part of
  - ■ Once you're in the group, go to "Members" and select "See all"
  - ■ Find the person and click "Message"

Referrals

- [Repher](#)
- [ReferralHub](#)
- [Get Job Referrals to Top Tech Companies - Exponent](#)

Resume Tips

- Remove start and end months for positions, only have the years
- Remove school graduation dates
- Limit work to last the 10 years and/or 4 professional positions
- It's okay to stretch the truth but don't lie
- Avoid internships unless they're notable (e.g. FAANG, SpaceX, etc) or an established program (e.g. Army Congressional Fellowship, U.S. Digital Corps Fellowship, etc)
- Know your resume inside out, everything written on it can be questioned
- Anyone in the process can ask a technical question, always be ready to talk about any item at a high level
- Use tried and true formats: [Tech CV/Resume Samples - Computer Science](#)

Compensation

Comparisons

- [H1B Salary Database](#)
- [Levels.fyi](#)

- [Salaries | Candor](#)
- [Software engineer salary (2024) | Wellfound](#)

Negotiations

- [Salary negotiation | Candor](#)
- [How Not to Bomb Your Offer Negotiation - haseeb qureshi](#)
- [Ten Rules for Negotiating a Job Offer - haseeb qureshi](#)
- [Salary Negotiation | Kalzumeus Software](#)

Final Round

Night Prior

- Don't do brain work after lunch
- After lunch review company culture/values and position details/expectations for about two hours
- Review technical story and behavioral question recordings for about two hours
- Leave study area for the rest of the evening and prepare everything (clothes, bag, etc) for the next day

On-Site

- Take some time before leaving to get in the right mind set: [Coding Interview Meditation](#)
- Business cards and/or LinkedIn profile QR code on phone case
- Physical notebook w/pen
- Laptop and accessories; it might not be needed, but it's clutch if it is
- Whiteboarding: Retractable dry erase markers, microfiber towel

Virtual

- Day before
  - Make sure the meeting time is correct for your time zone
  - Computer: Appropriate desktop icons, wallpaper, and browser shortcuts
  - Software: Up to date, settings are correct (camera, audio input/output)
  - Space: Desk is clear, background isn't distracting, face is well lit
- Day of
  - Get ready normally as if it were in-person: shower, groom, get dressed
  - 15 mins prior: stretch, vocal warm-up, hydrate, put phone on airplane mode
  - 10 mins prior: Make cohabitants know, close off the space

- ○ 5 mins prior: Join the call, check audio/video, open apps/sites required for the interview