Second-round Screen

If you receive an invitation to a second job interview, you deserve to be congratulated. The interviewers involved in the first round were convinced that you may be a good fit.

Usually, second-interview questions require you to share more about your competencies, in addition to your ethics and outlook about your work. Employers will also want to make sure you are able to work well within the company's culture. Your answers should align with the company's mission and the role of the position you are applying for. Remember that the company has an open position because they need to grow in an area of work or optimize a process, so it's important to showcase how you can contribute to fulfill its purpose.

General second-round preparation

To prepare for a second-round job interview, it is important to reflect on how the first interview went and plan accordingly. Here are some possible considerations:

- What went well? Use the experience wisely and to your advantage for the next time.
- Make note of the points that were discussed the most and which seemed to be more important or of particular interest to your interviewers. Prepare follow-up questions on those topics.
- Would you have answered a particular question differently? Was there a question that caught you off guard or was unexpected? How might you have responded instead? Think about what you'll say if you get another chance to address this topic.
- Recall the names and job positions of those you met at the previous interview.

Did you have any thoughts, questions, or concerns that came up after the first interview was over? Make note of them in case there's an opportunity to discuss them.

Types of second-round interviews

Second-round interviews are usually more focused than first or final interviews. You may meet with the same interviewers, but you will more likely meet with team leaders, technical managers, HR personnel, or others with distinct areas of interest. You may meet with higher-level or executive management, but each company proceeds differently.

HR screen

A screen by a human resources (HR) professional will usually focus on very basic questions about your past experience and understanding of the company and its culture. It may even take place as a first interview. It generally won't get into the nuts and bolts of a position, and there won't be involved technical questions. Here are some questions you might expect from this screen:

- What motivated you to apply for this job?
- What attracted you to our job listing?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What is your ideal working environment?
- What do you know about our company's product or services?
- What are your expectations about salary and other compensation?

With these questions, try to relate your experience to the answers and project a positive attitude. Think ahead about how to answer the questions that seem awkward; for example, if you left your last position for negative reasons, consider how to frame that neutrally and professionally. Don't relate your specific compensation history if asked, but be candid about your expected rates and how flexible you can be.

Team leader

If you interview with a team leader (often a project manager or other management), they may want to discuss the team you'd be working with and how they approach projects. There may be some discussion of your skills, but less than you would do with a technical screen. The team leader will be interested in understanding your work style, so they may ask you more behavioral questions. Here are some examples of questions you might expect.

- Tell me about a few of the first things you would do in this role.
- Give a few examples of best practices in data science.
- What's a data science project you would want to work on at our company?
- Tell me about a time you experienced conflict with a colleague and how you resolved it.
- Tell me about a time when your project failed. What did you do and what did you learn?
- Do you prefer to work closely with a team or mostly by yourself?
- How are you motivated?
- How do you start learning about a topic you don't know about yet?

Your answers to these questions will tell a hiring manager a lot about how you see your role and the value you bring to an organization. Build rapport with those who are present; make an effort to address interviewers by their name if you have met them before. Project yourself as an already-hired team member and discuss specific things that you'd want to learn and accomplish. Focus your responses on how you want to grow as a professional while exceling in your new role within the company.

Interviewers sometimes ask questions, such as, *"If you could have a superpower, which would it be and why?"* Although it may initially seem as off-topic or unrelated to the job position, the way you respond to these questions may reveal how you handle the unexpected stress, or perhaps gauge your creativity or the way you approach problems. Answer honestly and have fun when you think about and answer these kinds of questions.

Technical screen

A technical screen is usually conducted by a coding team leader or higher-level developer. Its purpose is to assess your technical skills and compare them to the skills needed for the position. Most of the questions will be about technical topics and team skills. Here are examples of the type of questions you may hear.

- What coding languages do you know?
- What are some of your favorite tools?
- How do you begin working on a problem you've been assigned?
- What do you do when you reach something you don't understand?
- How do you stay on schedule and manage your time?
- How do you prepare for a presentation?

There will usually be some specific problems to solve as well. Don't worry – the interviewer won't expect you to provide a perfect solution at once. These questions are meant to understand how you approach a problem and your thinking strategies.

Conclusion

No matter how you think the second interview goes, always try to end on a positive note and be explicit about your interest in the role. Express appreciation and thank each interviewer for the opportunity to interview again. Offer a sincere smile, handshake, and a wish that they are able to find the perfect fit for the job. Being enthusiastic and positive can leave a lasting impression and set you apart. Ask for contact information in case you need to reach them and respond promptly with any material they requested, such as links to your portfolio. Send thank-you notes the same day and follow up if you haven't heard back within the estimated timeframe.