

Introduction

- Today's topics
 - Upfront research
 - Technical prep
 - Handling difficult questions
 - Different types of interviews
 - What to bring with you
 - How to separate yourself from other equally qualified candidates
 - After the interview

Introduction

- Our advice is not cross-industry
 - Will the market researchers please leave the room.

Introduction

- Ground rules
 - We like a dynamic discussion, so please ask questions.
 - We'll answer immediately, or
 - If we know we're covering it later, we'll tell you, or
 - If it's too individual/unique, we'll tell you we want to talk with you individually afterward.

BOOM!

UPFRONT RESEARCH

Upfront Research

- Research the company.
 - Comb through the company's Web site.
 - Read the company's recent press releases. These are a great window into current successes and challenges.
 - Read articles written about the company.
 - Learn about their products and services.

Upfront Research

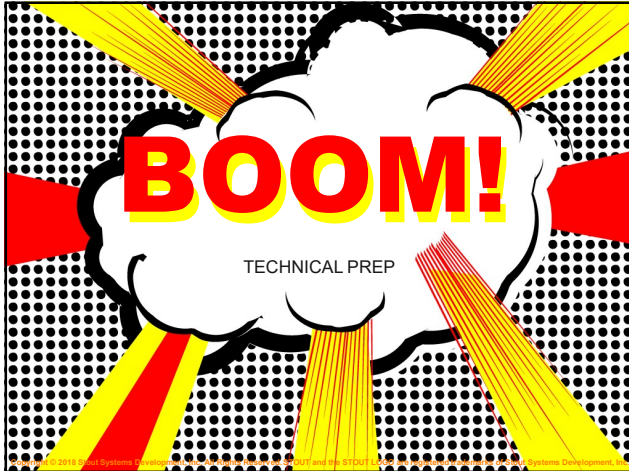
- Research the company.
- Research the people.
 - If possible, find out who you will be interviewing with and research them—not just the company.
 - Look at LinkedIn profiles for employees in similar roles and find out what they are like.

Upfront Research

- Research the company.
- Research the people.
- Pull together a few thoughtful questions.
 - Which product?
 - What stack?
 - Who is the competition?
 - Where does the product need to go?

Upfront Research

- What are your salary expectations?
 - Use freely available salary surveys like the ones from Robert Half and Dice.com to find out how much your peers earn.
 - Understand your current compensation package so that you can make intelligent trade-offs.
 - Don't try to be cagey. Do your research and give a base pay *range* that you'll consider.



Technical Prep

- Know your resume cold.
- For everything on it, you need to be able to rattle off information.
 - About the project
 - About the technology stack
 - About your role
 - About your contributions

Technical Prep

- Review/refresh so that technical terms and principles are right at your fingertips.
 - Basic programming and database terminology and principles that you haven't thought about since college
 - Go broad in your stack if you've been deep for a while
 - Key concepts in agile, project management, relevant areas

Technical Prep

- If you are missing a required or desired skill, figure out how to make a case for your candidacy.
 - Take time to see how closely a competitive tool aligns
 - Does prior experience with X really equal fast spin-up with Y?
 - Download it and test drive it

Technical Prep

- Pull samples together.
 - For Designers, Technical Writers and Business Analysts, have printed or electronic work samples.
 - Developers need coding samples.
 - If you are relying on a Web site for your work samples, make sure it is running and that you have the right URL.
- You should be doing this all the time. Don't wait until you are interviewing.

BOOM!

DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Difficult Interview Questions

- Interview questions come in four main types.
 - The technical questions, which probe your experience or your knowledge.
 - The huh? questions, which probe things on your resume that don't add up.
 - The HR questions, which probe your attitudes and how you fit the culture.
 - The oddball questions, which probe how well you think on your feet.

Difficult Interview Questions

- Drill answers to the huh? questions.
 - Have a great story for a resume gap.
 - Have a simple story for why you were fired or laid off.
 - Have a logical and positive story for why you are planning to leave your current job.

Difficult Interview Questions

- Turn-offs
 - You come off frustrated or down in the dumps.
 - You come off critical or negative.
 - You sound like someone who will be difficult to get along with.
 - TMI.
 - Really...anything other than a concise and complete answer.

Difficult Interview Questions

- HR questions are freely available online.
 - Search things like “common interview questions.”
 - Practice answering them, either by writing down a response or having a mock interview with a friend.

Difficult Interview Questions

- Oddball questions
 - You can search for these online, too.
 - They gauge how well you think on your feet and how creative you are.
 - Although some believe that they can glean insight about you based on your response.

Difficult Interview Questions

- Reality check.
 - If you brought your resume today, hand it to someone who doesn't know you.
 - Find out what questions the resume raises in his or her mind.
 - Note them down so that you can either address in resume or practice answering.
 - If time permits, test out an answer.

Difficult Interview Questions

- Mock Interview
 - Pair up.
 - Make sure each member of the pair has a different mock-interview version.
 - 10 minutes per pair, five each.

BOOM!

DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Different Types of Interviews

- Different interviews have different purposes
 - If you don't know what to expect, you can and should ask.
 - Fair questions are who will be conducting the interview, how long, the interview style, dress code, what you should bring.

Different Types of Interviews

- The phone interview
 - Can be conducted by HR to assess language and basic fit
 - Can be technical to weed candidates out
 - Sometimes a final phone interview takes place with upper level hiring authorities

Different Types of Interviews

- On site interview series
 - Multiple :30 to :60 interviews with one or two people at a time
 - They will regroup and vote

Different Types of Interviews

- The panel interview
 - A large group at the same time
 - Some practice will help you master this.
 - Address one person at a time—the one who posed the question to you.

Different Types of Interviews

- The white board interview
 - Typically done to reveal how candidates approach problems
 - Gives insight into how people address other points of view
 - Don't BS. Just say if you don't know or aren't sure. Some interviewers purposefully ask what they don't expect you to know.

Different Types of Interviews

- The presentation interview
 - You are asked in advance to prepare a presentation on a relevant topic.
 - You stand in front of the group (lecture style).
 - Reveals technical expertise, thought process and communication style

Different Types of Interviews

- The paired programming interview
 - You are given a problem to solve and the interviewer watches you work
 - Shows your coding style, your thought process, how you handle questions and comments
 - Typically open book open note

Different Types of Interviews

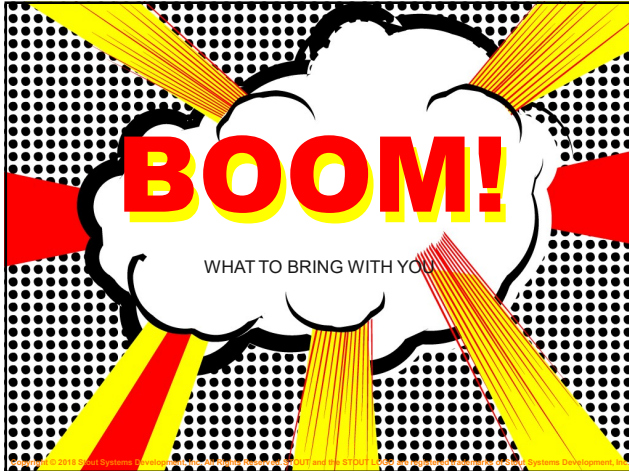
- The coding exercise or test
 - Tests are usually awful. If you are doing a coding test, write clean code and test it. Take no shortcuts.
 - Coding exercises are better. But still you should write clean code and test it. Better to leave TODOs in code where things are incomplete than to write poor code.

Different Types of Interviews

- What does a call-back interview signal?
 - Ask the same questions you usually would: who am I interviewing with, why and in what style?

Different Types of Interviews

- Lunch isn't just something nice
 - Companies are giving you an opportunity to reveal your personality in a less stressful environment.
 - Don't relax your guard and swear, tell jokes, be critical, etc.
 - It's definitely part of the interview.



What to Bring

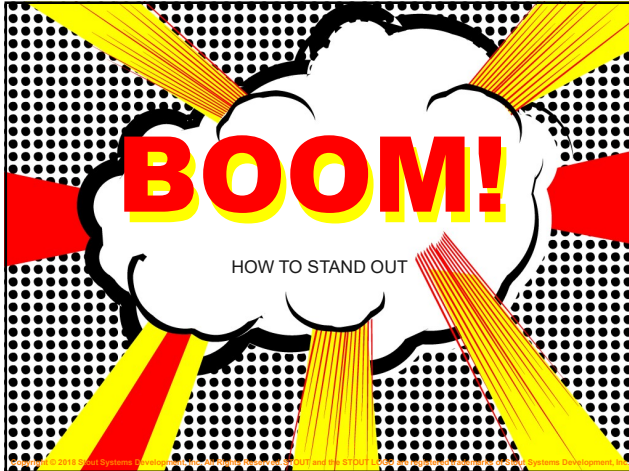
- The right attire
 - Too casual is the usual mistake
 - Too formal can be a mistake, too. You are signaling that you don't understand the company's culture.
 - Ironed, not stained, fits properly, from this decade

What to Bring

- Resources you may need to refer to
 - Bring at least one resume copy, if only for yourself
 - Bring employment application data including full info for your business references
 - Bring pen and paper
 - Bring your samples or URLs
 - Bring your question list or notes

What to Bring

- A way to record the names and roles of everyone you meet
 - Keep it right in front of you during the interview. It's okay.
 - Get the email address and phone number of the main contact(s) you're interviewing with



How to Stand Out

- Sometimes the questions you ask are the only things that differentiate you from other qualified candidates.
- If you have no questions at all, then you are signaling no interest at all.

How to Stand Out

- Problems I might solve for you
 - What is keeping you up at night? How will you expect me to help you solve that?
 - What is motivating this hire? Am I backfilling someone? Do you have a gap in knowledge on the team? Do you need better velocity from the team?

How to Stand Out

- What should I accomplish?
 - What would you expect me to accomplish in the first 90 days?
 - In the first 180 days?
 - How will you know I'm succeeding in this role?

How to Stand Out

- What factors are most important in this role?
 - Do you think I would succeed because of some personal attribute?
 - Do you think I would succeed because of some technical skill?
 - Do you think I would succeed because of something in my background or experience?

How to Stand Out

- What do you expect or want my growth trajectory to be over time?
 - Will you want me to expand technically?
 - Will you want me to expand in domain knowledge?
 - Will you want me to expand in my leadership capability?
 - Will you want me to expand as a mentor?

How to Stand Out

- What challenges does the company or product face? Can I help solve them?
 - Are there market pressures?
 - Are there competitive pressures?
 - How can I have an impact?

How to Stand Out

- Be prepared to say, right then and there, why you want to work there
 - Love the stack?
 - Love the domain?
 - Love the company?
 - Love the mission?
 - Love the manager and team?

How to Stand Out

- Be prepared to say, right then and there, why you want to work there
- Failing to express enthusiasm is the #2 reason candidates are rejected—right after lacking requisite skill
 - Even if you're not the cheerleader type, you must accomplish this in your own way.

BOOM!

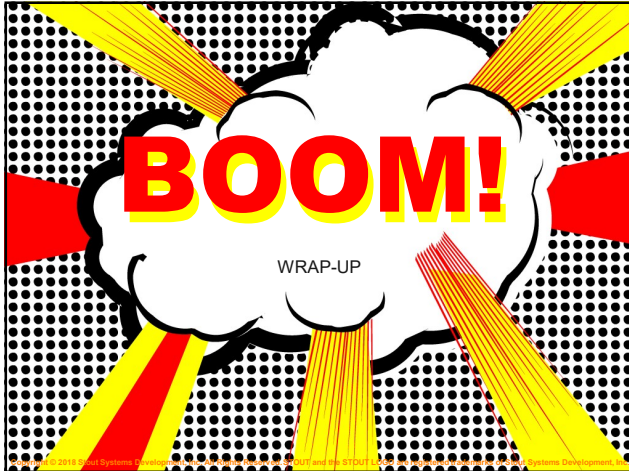
AFTER THE INTERVIEW

After the Interview

- Write a thank-you email.
- Write down everything that stumped you in the interview.
 - Look it up.
 - Or figure out how to answer it (if it was a personal question)
 - Or google the question and see if it's a common "thought-provoking" question like what kind of animal would you want to be

After the Interview

- Write a thank-you email.
- Write down everything that stumped you in the interview.
- Learn from any mistakes.



Wrap-Up

- Thanks for attending!
- General questions?
- If you have specific questions, we'll answer them after.
- Our shameless plug...

Mock Interview Questions

- Why do you want to leave your current job?
- How do you define success?
- Tell me about the professional accomplishment that you are most proud of.
- Tell me about a time that you had a significant disagreement with your management (or your teammates). At a high level, what was the central issue and how did you resolve the disagreement?
- On this team, what cartoon character can we expect you to be?
- If you could design your ideal manager, what qualities would he or she have?
- What would you say are your three greatest strengths? Three greatest weaknesses?
- How did you make time for this interview? Where does your boss think you are right now?
- If you could be any figure in history, who would that be and why?
- Have you ever been asked to compromise your integrity by your supervisor or colleague? Tell me about the situation and how you responded to it.
- What kind of boss and coworkers have you experienced the most success with, and why? The least success with, and why?
- What would you do if you won \$10 million dollars?
- How many gas stations would you say there are in the United States?
- Tell me about a difficult situation that you faced but were able to successfully turn around.
- Tell me a bit about your favorite job/manager and your least favorite job/manager. What was it that made them your most and least favorites?
- Tell me about a time you failed to deliver what you promised on the job. When did you realize you were in trouble? How did you handle this with your teammates and/or management?
- Why are manhole covers round?