



All About Timing

You can achieve the best financial outcome when hunting for a tech job when you are able to land multiple offers around the same time. Though it can be tricky, timing your interviews and offers is crucial for a well-negotiated compensation package.

You can not time the stock market, but you can certainly time your interviews. In order to land the best offer, you must schedule your interviews with different companies in such a way that if successful, you receive all the offers interspersed within a two to four-week span. This is the most crucial factor in gaining leverage when negotiating with companies in the post-offer stage.

One common tactic used by employers is to make exploding offers. An exploding offer is one that sets a tight deadline for the candidate to either accept the offer or risk losing it. The goal is to coerce the candidate into accepting the offer and limit the candidate's ability to shop around and use the company's offer as leverage against other companies that the candidate may have received offers from. Hence, if you fail to schedule interviews around the same time, you may end up accepting a low-ball offer under pressure.



Few days later, as Murphy's Law would have it, you will have an offer from your desired company staring at you in your inbox. This is an extremely common occurrence and confronts folks with ethical and moral dilemmas should they wish to decline an already accepted offer. But far more

importantly, the candidates are unable to extract the best possible offer since bad timing prevents them from pitting potential employers against each other.

There are several ways to successfully prepare for interviews depending on your situation and circumstances. However, we suggest at least three months of preparation, where you can set-up phone screens spaced apart to your liking but then the on-sites together. If you are casting a really wide net and interviewing for several dozen companies, you may want to batch on-sites for companies that compete against one another together e.g., Facebook, Amazon, Google, etc. interviews can be set up one week, and on-sites for startups the next. Below is an example four-month-long interview preparation timeline while working a full time job that you can follow. You can contract the timeline to two months if you are not working.

- **Month 1:** Start preparation for phone screens. Practice coding questions and a two to three minute brief about your current project and your role within it.
- **Month 2:** Schedule and start knocking on phone screens one by one. Keep up with your preparation at the same time. As you clear phone screens, schedule on-sites at the end of month three or thereafter.
- **Month 3:** Finish up preparation and phone screens. If you are not an experienced candidate, first set up at least two on-sites with the companies you are least interested to join. The interviews should serve as practice and help you to identify any gaps in your preparation.
- **Month 4 - week 1:** Schedule on-sites for a cohort of similar companies, e.g. Facebook, Google.
- **Month 4 - week 2:** Schedule Twitter, Pinterest, Salesforce, Box, Dropbox
- **Month 4 - week 3:** Schedule Microsoft, Salesforce, Uber, Lyft

• **Month 4 - week 4:** Schedule startups Stripe, KeepTruckin, DoorDash, etc.



- Prep for phone screens
- Practise coding questions
- Prepare project brief
- Describe current role



- Schedule and give phone screens one by one
- Keep practicing
- As you clear phone screens, schedule on-sites at the end of month three or thereafter



- Finish preparation and phone screens
- If inexperienced candidate, set up at least two on-sites with the companies you are least interested to join as practice



- Schedule on-sites (keep startups at the end)

Four month long interview preparation timeline

Ideally, you should schedule all your on-sites within a three-week span so that any offers made should land nearby. However, this may not be practical for folks who cannot use paid time off from their current job to interview. In such a scenario, start with the tier of companies you are most interested in. In our example, if you are able to crack Facebook and Google, you will be able to pit one against the other. Say, you are able to crack Facebook but not Google, then you should go to the second tier of companies since an offer from Facebook should let you pack a strong punch when negotiating with Uber. Last, but not the least, if you intend to work for startups, then schedule on-sites with them at the very end. You will be able to exert maximum negotiation leverage with startups if your candidacy already comes FANG-approved.

It also leaves a really good impression if you have offers from other reputable companies. Recruiters and hiring managers see it as an additional level of validation to the ability of their hiring process to bubble up the right candidates to the offer stage. From the personal experience of one of the authors of this course as a hiring manager, some candidates may hesitate

from sharing their other offers fearing that the employer may take it for lack of seriousness/interest in their position. We would like to suggest that having multiple offers is almost always received positively.

Here is a special note about Google. If it is high up in the list of companies you are targeting, start the process with Google a few weeks ahead of kicking things off with other companies. This is because Google is notoriously slow and unique with their hiring process, both in the pre- and post-interview stage, as most of the hiring decisions are made by committees, which meet once or twice a week. A hiring committee, made up of experienced employees, makes the offer or no-offer decision based on the feedback from interviews. Then, a compensation committee decides the compensation. Very often, before a final decision could be made, recruiters will have to go back and forth with the committees to satisfy their requests for things like a follow-up interview, internal or external referrals, competing offer details to justify requests for comp increase etc. That can easily consume a month or two. As a result, many candidates will find themselves in a situation where the offer decision or compensation details on their Google candidacy is still a few weeks away while they have deadlines to decide on their other exploding offers.

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