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HOW TO INTERVIEW AN ENGINEER WITH **EXPERT FINESSE** IN 60 MINUTES

A Time-Stamped Guideline To
Conducting Quality Interviews



HOW TO INTERVIEW AN ENGINEER WITH **EXPERT FINESSE** IN 60 MINS

This comprehensive eBook equips clients with **powerful frameworks** for conducting **successful interviews** across all stages of hiring.

With tech interviews with junior and senior developers and HR interviews, unlock the strategies and insights necessary to identify top talent and build exceptional teams.

//Contents

* Tech interview

- > of a Junior Developer
- > of a Senior Developer

* Non-tech interview

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//Tech interview of a Junior Developer

Total interview time: 60 mins

* /Introduction [3 minutes]

Content: Begin the interview by introducing yourself, your role, and giving an overview of the company. This sets the stage and makes the candidate comfortable.

Impact: This helps to establish a positive rapport and encourages the candidate to be open and relaxed, thus aiding in a more productive conversation.

* /Understanding the Candidate's Background (10 minutes)

Content: Ask the candidate about their background, previous projects, and experiences. You can discuss their role in these projects, technologies used, challenges faced, and how they overcame them.

Impact: This gives you insights into the candidate's practical experience, problem-solving abilities, and how they function in a team setting.

Example questions

- Can you tell me about a project you're particularly proud of and your contribution to it?
 - What challenges did you face while working on your most recent project and how did you overcome them?
 - Can you tell me about a time when you had to learn a new technology or tool for a project?
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* /Technical Assessment [35 minutes]

#1 Core Skills Assessment [10 minutes]

Content: Ask questions on core programming concepts such as data structures, algorithms, object-oriented programming, databases, etc. The focus should be on the fundamentals irrespective of the programming language.

Impact: This gives an insight into the candidate's foundational knowledge of programming, and how well they understand the fundamental building blocks of software development.

Example questions

- Can you explain the difference between a stack and a queue?
- What are the four principles of Object-Oriented Programming and can you provide examples for each?
- Can you describe what happens when you type a URL into a web browser and press enter?

#2 Language/Technology Specific Questions (7 minutes)

Content: Dive into the specifics of the programming languages and technologies mentioned in the candidate's resume. If the role involves working with a specific language or technology, include questions on that as well.

Impact: This allows you to gauge how well the candidate knows the particular languages or technologies they will be working with, and how comfortable they are in using them.

Example questions

- (If the role is JavaScript focused) Can you explain what closure is in JavaScript and give an example where it might be useful?
- (If the role involves working with databases) Can you explain the difference between SQL and NoSQL databases?
- (If the role involves web development) Can you explain how CSS precedence works?

#3 Coding Challenge (15 minutes)

Content: Present a coding problem for the candidate to solve. This could be a problem that requires designing an algorithm, or a real-world problem that they might encounter on the job. The challenge can be conducted on a platform like HackerRank or via a shared document.

Impact: This exercise lets you assess the candidate's problem-solving skills, their ability to write clean, efficient code, and how they approach debugging and testing their code.

Example coding problem

Given an array of integers, write a function that finds the two numbers that sum to zero. If there are multiple pairs that sum to zero, return the pair with the smallest non-negative element.

#4 Review of Past Projects (3 minutes)

Content: Ask the candidate to explain a piece of code they've written in the past. Have them explain how the code works, why they chose to write it in that way, and what they might do differently now.

Impact: This can provide insight into the candidate's ability to reason about code, their coding style, and how they approach code reviews and improvements.

Example questions

- Can you explain this piece of code you wrote for your past project and why you chose this approach?
 - If you could go back, what changes would you make to the code and why?
 - How did you test this piece of code?
-

* /Behavioral Assessment (7 minutes)

Content: Ask situational or behavioral questions to assess the candidate's soft skills. This could involve how they handle conflicts, work in a team, handle pressure or deadlines, their approach to learning new skills, etc.

Impact: This section helps you understand the candidate's interpersonal skills, attitude, and cultural fit within the company.

Example questions

- Can you share an instance where you had to handle a disagreement or conflict in your team? How did you manage it?
 - Can you tell me about a time when you were under a lot of pressure at work? How did you handle it?
 - Describe a time when you had to learn a new skill to complete a task or project. How did you go about it?
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* /Wrap-up and Candidate's Questions (5 minutes)

Content: Summarize the interview, discuss the next steps, and invite the candidate to ask any questions they may have.

Impact: This gives the candidate a chance to clarify any doubts they might have, and it provides you an additional insight into what the candidate values or is curious about.

Example questions

- Do you have any questions about the role, team, or company?
 - Is there anything you want to share or clarify that we didn't cover in the interview?
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//Tech interview of a Senior Developer

Total interview time: 60 mins

* /Introduction and Candidate's Background [10 minutes]

Content: Quick introduction about you, your role, and a brief about the company and the role. Ask about the candidate's work experience, roles, and significant contributions.

Impact: Sets the stage and offers context to the candidate. It helps in understanding their career progression and depth of technical expertise.

Example Questions :

- Could you briefly walk us through your career path until now?
- Tell us about a project you're particularly proud of and what your role was in it.
- What was one of the biggest technical challenges you faced in your last role, and how did you overcome it?

* /Technical and Coding Assessment (25 minutes)

Content: Probe their understanding of software design principles, data structures, algorithms, and your tech stack. Include a short, live coding exercise.

Impact: Helps assess their problem-solving approach, coding style, and performance under pressure.

Example Questions :

- Could you write a function to find the first non-repeating character in a string?
- Explain how you would use a hashmap to solve this problem.
- Can you discuss how inheritance and polymorphism work in object-oriented programming?

* /System Design Round (15 minutes)

Content: Discuss a design problem that is relevant to your organization.

Impact: Showcases their architectural and design skills, understanding of various system design principles, and how they handle complex, large-scale systems.

Example Questions :

- How would you design a highly scalable and efficient ride-sharing service like Uber?
 - Can you describe how you would go about designing a microservice-based architecture for an e-commerce platform?
 - How would you handle data consistency in a distributed database system?
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* /Behavioral and Culture Fit (5 minutes)

Content: Ask about the candidate's soft skills, communication, and teamwork capabilities, and their alignment with the company's culture.

Impact: Helps understand if the candidate will fit into the company culture and their potential for team collaboration.

Example Questions :

- Can you tell us about a time when you had a disagreement with a team member and how you resolved it?
- How do you handle feedback, especially when it's challenging?
- Why are you interested in this role and our company?

* /Closing and Candidate's Questions (5 minutes)

Content: Allow them to ask questions and brief them on the next steps.

Impact: This can clear any doubts the candidate may have and gives you a chance to sell your company's vision and the role.

Example Questions :

- Do you have any questions for us about the role or the company?
 - What are your expectations from this role and the team?
 - What factors are most important to you in deciding your next career move?
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//Non-tech interview

Total interview time: 45 mins

* /Introduction [5 minutes]

Content: Welcome the candidate, introduce yourself and the company, and briefly explain the job role.

Impact: This creates a friendly environment, which can help put the candidate at ease, and sets the right expectations for the rest of the interview.

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* /Candidate's Introduction and Resume Review (10 minutes) :

Content: Ask the candidate to introduce themselves, talk about their previous experiences, and go over their CV to confirm their technical skill set.

Impact: This helps gauge communication skills, confidence, and also verify the candidate's qualifications and experience as per their resume.

Example questions

- Can you briefly walk me through your professional background and experiences?
 - What are your technical proficiencies and how did you acquire them?
 - Could you elaborate on your role and responsibilities in your most recent job/project?
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* /Behavioral Questions (10 minutes)

Content: Ask questions that reveal the candidate's problem-solving capabilities, teamwork, time management, and ability to handle pressure.

Impact: This helps you evaluate the candidate's soft skills, cultural fit, and how they handle real-world situations.

Example questions

- Could you tell me about a time when you faced a significant obstacle on a project, and how you overcame it?
- How do you prioritize your work when you have multiple projects with the same deadline?
- Can you share an experience of working with a difficult team member and how you managed to maintain a good working relationship?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision at work. What was the situation and how did you handle it?

* /Technical Screening (10 minutes) :

Content: Since you don't have deep engineering expertise, you can use predefined questions or scenarios to assess their technical skills. Use questions provided by your technical team or use a tool like Codility or HackerRank for a live coding test. These platforms are equipped with problems for every level and allow you to evaluate their coding skills without knowing the technical details.

Impact: This helps you assess their problem-solving skills, coding abilities, and understanding of algorithms and data structures.

Example questions

(For non-technical interviewers, questions are meant to gauge candidate's way of explaining technical matters):

- Can you explain how you approach error handling in your coding?
- Can you describe a complex technical project or task you've recently worked on and explain it as if I have no technical background?
- Could you explain the difference between object-oriented and functional programming in layman's terms?

* /Questions About the Company and Role (5 minutes) :

Content: Ask the candidate what they know about the company and why they applied for this role. Additionally, ask them where they see themselves in the future in your company.

Impact: This will show you whether the candidate is truly interested in your company and has a long-term vision associated with it.

Example questions

- Why are you interested in our company? What about our product or mission resonates with you?
 - Why did you apply for this particular role? What aspects of it appeal to you the most?
 - Where do you see yourself in the next 3 years within our company?
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* /Candidate's Questions (5 minutes)

Content: Give the candidate an opportunity to ask any questions they have. These questions could be about the team, work culture, projects, technologies, etc.

Impact: The type of questions a candidate asks can also tell a lot about their priorities and interests.
