Technical Leadership

Conversational | 45 minutes

Here are some potential questions you might be asked to assess your technical leadership skills during an engineering manager interview:

Technical Expertise and Problem-Solving

- **Advanced Technical Scenario:**
  - The interviewer might present a more complex technical problem relevant to the specific role or technology stack used by the company.
  - They'll assess your ability to analyze the problem, identify potential solutions, discuss trade-offs, and explain your thought process.
- **Staying Ahead of the Curve:**
  - The focus might shift to how you stay up-to-date with advanced topics in your field.
  - They might ask about your experience with emerging technologies, your approach to evaluating new tech for potential adoption, & how you balance staying current with the demands of your current role.

Describe a complex technical challenge your team faced. How did you approach it, and what was the outcome?

How do you stay up-to-date on the latest advancements in your technical field?

Explain a technical concept to someone with no tech background.

You're presented with a hypothetical technical problem relevant to the position. How would you go about diagnosing and solving it?

You need to make a technical decision with significant implications for the project. How would you approach this, and what factors would you consider?

Leadership and Team Management

- **Handling Difficult Conversations:**
    - This could involve a scenario where you need to address a performance issue with a team member who has strong technical skills.
    - The interviewer will be looking for your approach to providing constructive criticism, motivating improvement, and fostering a positive working relationship.
- **Building High-Performing Teams:**
    - Here, they might ask about your strategies for building high-performing teams.
    - This could involve discussions on your approach to team composition (ensuring a mix of skills and personalities), conflict resolution strategies, and methods for creating a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

🏈 How do you motivate and inspire your team members?

Describe your approach to delegating tasks and empowering your team.

How do you handle situations where team members have different skillsets or work styles?

Give an example of a time you had to provide constructive criticism to a team member.

Leadership Frameworks

Q: Leadership and Team Management

Mentorship and Team Development

How do you identify areas where your team members can improve their technical skills?

Walk me through an example of how you mentored a junior engineer on your team.

How do you encourage a growth mindset within your engineering team?

Q : Mentorship and Team Development

Communication and Collaboration

- **Technical Communication to Stakeholders:**
  - The interviewer might ask you to describe a situation where you had to explain a complex technical issue to stakeholders with no technical background.
  - They'll assess your ability to simplify complex concepts, tailor your communication to the audience, and ensure clear understanding of the technical aspects of the project.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:**
  - Engineering managers often need to collaborate with other departments like product, design, or marketing.
  - The interviewer might ask about your experience working effectively with cross-functional teams, your strategies for aligning different priorities, and your approach to resolving communication challenges between these teams.

How do you communicate complex technical information to stakeholders who may not have a technical background?

Describe your experience with resolving conflict within a team.

Describe a time you had to resolve a conflict between team members with different technical approaches.

How do you foster a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing within your team?

How do you manage remote team members or geographically dispersed teams?

Info: Communication and Collaboration

Strategic Thinking and Business Acumen

- **Technical Impact on Business Goals:**
  - This could involve a scenario where you need to make a technical decision that has business implications.
  - The interviewer will be looking for your ability to analyze the technical feasibility, consider the potential business impact (cost, revenue, etc.), and clearly articulate the trade-offs involved in different approaches.
- **Technical Debt Management:**
  - Engineering managers need to balance new features with managing technical debt.
  - Here, they might ask about your approach to identifying and prioritizing technical debt, strategies for mitigating its impact, and communicating the importance of technical debt management to your team and stakeholders.

How do you ensure that your team's work aligns with the organization's overall business goals?

Describe a situation where you had to make a technical decision with business implications.

How do you measure the success of your engineering team?

What is your experience with using data to drive technical decisions?

Prioritisation, Delegation, and Project Management

You have several competing priorities for your team. How do you decide what to focus on first?

Describe a situation where you had to delegate a complex task to a team member. How did you ensure successful completion?

How do you measure the success of a technical project you manage?

Technical Leadership Scenarios

You inherit a codebase that is poorly documented and difficult to maintain. How would you approach improving the code quality and developer experience?

Your team is resistant to adopting a new technology that you believe could significantly improve your product. How would you convince them of its benefits?

Imagine a situation where you disagree with a technical decision made by a senior engineer on your team. How would you address this situation?

Performance management techniques

Performance management techniques to effectively evaluate, develop, and motivate team members

Building and scaling high-performing engineering teams

As an engineering manager II, how to build and scaling high-performing engineering teams

Additional Questions

What leadership styles do you identify with, and how do you adapt your style to different situations?

Tell us about a time you had to learn a new technology quickly. How did you approach it?

How do you manage your time effectively when juggling multiple priorities?

What are your salary expectations? (This might come towards the end of the interview)

Describe a time you had to make a difficult decision as an engineering manager. (This is an opportunity to showcase your problem-solving skills and decision-making process)

Few more questions

- Remember to highlight your achievements using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to provide concrete examples of your technical leadership skills in action.

Know More

Interview Guide