



PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS OVERVIEW



WHAT TO HAVE READY

Do you have your resume to reference? How about the job description? Don't rely on memorizing everything!



WHAT TO RESEARCH

Whether it's about the company or the interviewer, do some research!



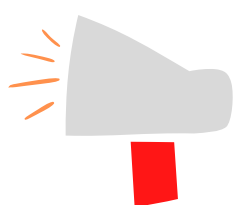
CONDUCTING YOURSELF DURING THE CALL

All about tips, tricks, professionalism, and other ways to give a good impression when they can't see you!



HOW NONVERBALS AFFECT THE INTERVIEW

A lot can be perceived from over the phone. Check these tips to beat biases!



VERBALS

What should you be saying during the interview? What shouldn't you say?



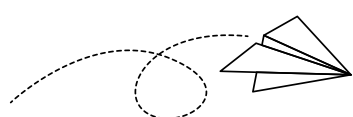
SALARY NEGOTIATION

How to research salaries and reminders on negotiation skills.



QUESTIONS

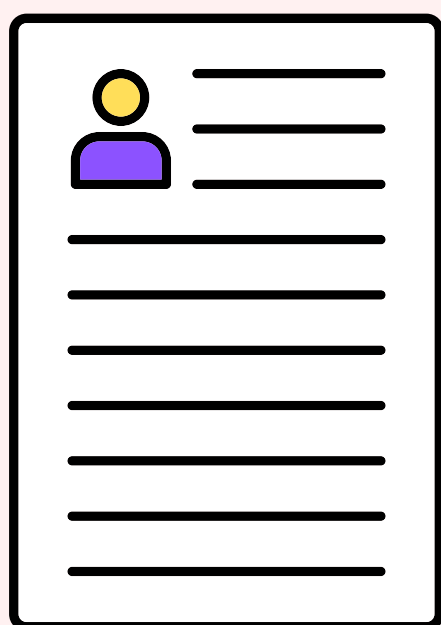
Never let the interview end without asking questions!



FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

Are you maintaining expectations and following up appropriately?

WHAT TO HAVE READY BEFORE THE PHONE INTERVIEW



Resume

Do not make the mistake of not having your resume on-hand. This will help you remember the timeline of events, how long you were at each place of experience, certifications, and

other tidbits of information that are hard to memorize. Interviewers over the phone will most likely ask about a specific part of your resume. Although you should be accurate in your recall, you should not directly read off of your resume. The interviewer will notice, and doing so will cause some red flags to raise. Be sure to practice a pitch that is different than what is directly on your resume!

Portfolio

Update your portfolio! Is the correct contact information on there? Are the links working? Are your projects properly hosted? Give the interviewer something to interact with before or after the interview to know more about you!



Job Description

Have the original job description out in front of you! When you answer questions about yourself, think of what they're looking for in a candidate. If there is a responsibilities section, try to connect your past experiences to show that you can do the job requirements if you were to be hired. Take note of the information in the job description as well as what is NOT. This helps you prepare questions (revisit this on the page all about questions).

Phone



P.S. Don't forget to charge your phone! Having your phone die during the conversation is an easy excuse for them to pass on you!

RESEARCH



Researching the Company:

- Things to research: company website, company LinkedIn page, company reviews, company social media, recent activity by the company, growth of the company, different roles within the company, company values, technologies used by the company (including internal tools), etc.
- Mention certain details when the situation arises. For example: if the company values align with your own, let them know!
- When creating questions, try to ask at least one question that is specific to the company. For example: How has the recent acquisition of company X affect the day-to-day and structure of parent company Y?

Researching the Team:

- People to research: the interviewer, panelists, hiring manager, members of the team, C-level executives, direct supervisors, etc.
- Look for details to build rapport with the people that you will be interviewing with.
- Details such as if the interviewer is a recruiter vs. talent acquisition specialist or a generalist vs. technical recruiter can help you know in advance the depth of the questions you will be asked.

Researching the Job Description:

- Take the research you've done on the job description and bring up pertinent information surrounding it!
- Tell the interviewer what you believe the job entails and ask for additional information on the day-to-day, requirements, and relevant technologies.
- Highlight the parts of your experience that aligns most to the job responsibilities to showcase your capabilities.
- Remember to have the job description on-hand during the phone interview!



The Phone Interview

Congratulations! You've made it to the phone screen. The rest of the document includes some tips and tricks to maintain good impressions during the actual call, how your nonverbal cues affect what people perceive about you, what the content of the conversation should be about, and follow-up notes.



Be professional.

A professional tone and excitement can leave a good impression on your interviewer, and they'll remember that as they consider their hiring decision.

Be an active listener.

Be attentive, ask insightful questions, and engage with the interviewer. Pay attention to every word, and do not say "huh?" or "what?". Show your interviewer that you are taking the conversation seriously and that you care about what they say. Be sure to ask questions that show that you have been listening.

Find a quiet environment to take the call in and eliminate distractions.

Be in a quiet room so you can hear the interviewer clearly. Turn off the television, music, alarms, and other devices that could interrupt your call. Try not to schedule any guests near the time of the interview. Let people and potential callers know that you will be unavailable for a period of time. Consider how to avoid pets interrupting your conversation.

Take notes.

Take notes during each interview stage to retain information as you progress throughout the interview process.

Have water nearby.

Drink water to clear your throat. Having a sip of water can also bid time to answer a question.

Study common interview questions.

Studying common interview questions can help prepare for curveball scenarios the interviewer may throw out. Practice!

Prepare examples from your experience in advance.

Prepare some scenarios in advance to apply to different behavioral questions if they pop up. More about this on the verbal communication page.

The Importance of Nonverbal Communication



People can perceive you based on communication cues that are not about the content of your words, even when they can't see you over the phone! Here are some ways to avoid a bad impression when it comes to your communication skills.



- **Do not miss the call!** - Be sure to remind yourself of the time to expect the phone call.
- **Smile when you speak!** - People can hear when you smile when you talk. This promotes positivity and energy.
- **Speak clearly at a normal pace.** - Do not mumble or have excessive vocal fry. Avoid sounding tired. Try not to rush your sentences or give awkward pauses. Avoid saying filler words such as: like, um, uh. Speak with intent, and do not circle around an answer.
- **Treat them with respect.** - The interviewer has taken time out of their day to help you with your career. Be sure to end off with a show of gratitude by thanking them. Speak to them with some formality during the call, and do not cross boundaries.
- **Be still and focus on the conversation.** - Although we can't see you, we can tell when you're driving, eating, or generally preoccupied with another task during a call. Give your full attention to the interviewer!
- **Be attentive and awake.** - Try sitting up to get a good amount of oxygen to speak. Get enough rest to not be tired during the conversation. Avoid yawning. Be sure to actively listen and show them you retained the info.
- **React to conversation cues.** - Much of a good interview involves mirroring the conversationalist. If they start small talk, partake in it. Mirror the tone of the conversation, and show that you can communicate your information effectively. They leave with a much better opinion of you if they enjoyed talking to you!

Verbal Communication

What do I say during this interview?



Greet the interviewer.

Exchange pleasantries in the beginning. Let the interviewer guide the pace of the conversation. If they participate in small talk, engage with them. Find moments in the conversation to build rapport.

Tell the truth.

Be truthful when it comes to questions about if you know a skill, when you were at a company, what you have experience in, whether you would relocate, etc.

Answer behavioral questions.

Use scenarios you prepared beforehand for strong examples in response to behavioral questions if they come up during the phone screen. Common themes to prepare for are: communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, problem solving, decision making, leadership, and time management.

Showcase relevant skills.

When given the chance, use examples that pertain to your software engineering journey. When you speak about your experience, be sure to mention the relevant technologies that you know. Convince the interviewer that you are worth taking a chance on.

Keep the conversation friendly.

Do not focus on the negatives during the interview. Be honest about shortcomings, but also express that you're eager to learn. Never leave anything on a bad note, especially answers to behavioral questions.

Deliver your best pitch!

Practice on explaining your professional story in a concise way. Move through your resume from least to most recent. End off with goals, things you're continuing to learn, and how you fit with the company.

Sprinkle in questions.

Be sure to acknowledge when you're paying attention by quietly saying "mhm", "okay", "yes", and other general words to confirm understanding. If you need elaboration on something explained, be sure to ask some questions in-between topics.

Salary NEGOTIATION

Arguably one of the scariest parts about an interview... But have no fear, you have salary negotiation strategies to help you with this part of the conversation! When given the chance, ALWAYS negotiate your pay!

Research salaries!

Use resources like salary.com to look up salary ranges. Be sure to look up the position's salary at different companies and places. Keep in mind that a state's income level might naturally be lower in their area. Convert to hourly if needed.

Consider what salary you would accept.

After doing research on salaries, calculate how high of a salary you would accept after negotiating. Be sure to take in mind if a company has a minimum amount they pay towards software engineers. Do not be afraid to walk away you the job cannot afford you.

Never give out the first number!

If the interviewer asks you what salary range you were expecting, do not give out the number.

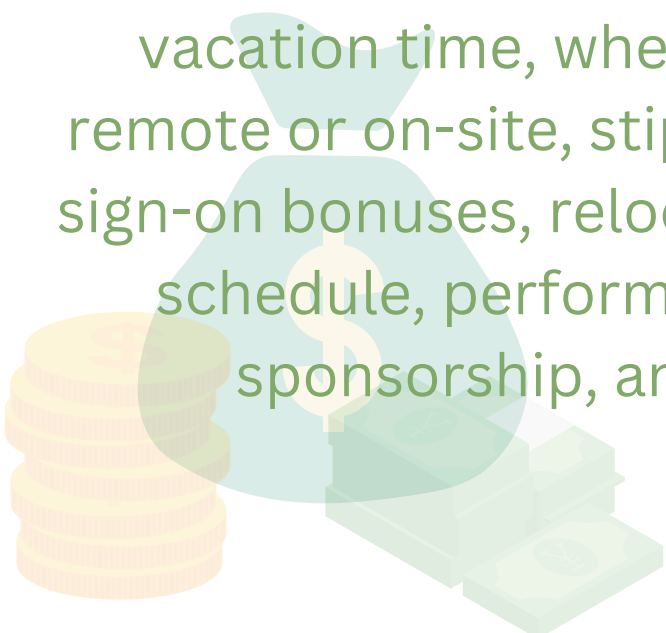
Instead, find a way to politely redirect the question back at them. Asking them statistics about their median rate and hiring budget is a great way to have them give you the first number.

Provide a range when negotiating.

After they provide a number, let them you are open to negotiating. Provide a range to let them know you are flexible. Be reasonable with your ranges. Try to keep the difference around \$5,000 - \$10,000.

Determine what you want to negotiate. Remember, it's not just the pay rate you can negotiate!

Did you know that you can negotiate benefits, vacation time, whether your position will be remote or on-site, stipends for supplies, job title, sign-on bonuses, relocation reimbursement, work schedule, performance reviews, education sponsorship, and of course... salary?



Questions



The interviewer will most likely ask you if you have any questions for them to answer periodically throughout the conversation. Ask during the moment, but never leave without also asking questions at the end! This shows your enthusiasm about learning more about the role and company.

This is as much of an interview for you as it is for them. Ask questions throughout the interview that are pertinent to the topic, but allow the interviewer to guide the conversation.

Keep at multiple questions to bring up at the end of the interview. Here are some examples:

- What is your favorite part about working for this company?
- What do you look for in a new hire?
- What is the company culture like?
- What are some ways that the company is trying to improve itself?
- What does the growth of the company look like in the next few years?
- What are some projects that this role will entail me work on?
- What does the team structure look like?
- How is success tracked and measured?
- Who would I be directly reporting to?
- What does the frequency of meetings versus (other task here) look like?
- What other responsibilities not listed would this role be in charge of?

Tip: Be sure not to ask a question that the interviewer has already answered. If you do, they might think you weren't listening to them!

Tip: Remember to have a company-specific question as well as a question to provoke thought around the future.



Follow-Up!

1

Wait! Before you leave, ask about next steps!

Asking about next steps can show your enthusiasm for the role while also obtaining more information about the interview process. Manage your expectations. If you're in other interview processes, let the interviewer know so they can prepare their own timelines. Knowing when to expect the next stage can help you prepare for next steps.

2

Send a thank-you email!

Within 24 hours, send your interviewer a thank you email. Thank them for their time and express your interest in continuing with the process. Include something relevant to the conversation within the email. If you want elaboration on something about the job, this is a great time to ask. Give available times for future interviews.

3

Follow-up with the interviewer!

If you don't hear back within a week, follow-up via email. Note if they mentioned the timeline to expect any next steps, where they are in the interview processes, and if they mentioned how many people they are considering for the role. Be courteous in your email, and do not call or text the phone for an answer.

