

HOW TO NOT FAIL THE SOFTWARE INTERVIEW



The First Call

- Almost always a Recruiter / HR Person
- Ask for the Job Description
- Tailor your answers to the bullet points
 - ▣ Give them the Keywords they are looking for.
 - ▣ Don't drown in the details.
 - ▣ Play up non-development skills, personality, communication, teamwork, and leadership.
- Highlight Past / Present Accomplishments
- Have a good answer as to why you are looking.
- Be prepared to talk MONEY!!!

Recon

- Study the Job Description
 - ▣ Highlight technologies you are experienced with.
 - ▣ Highlight technologies / acronyms you are not familiar with.
Go get basic definitions of all of them. Print them...
- Study the Company
 - ▣ Read about the companies core competency
 - What do they do. Try to put yourself in their developers shoes.
 - ▣ Read other job descriptions on their website.
 - Look for technologies and processes (i.e. Silverlight & Scrum)
 - ▣ Look for identifiers of problems
 - “Fast paced” / “challenging environment”, “good people skills a must”, “certification “XYZ” required.

The TECHNICAL CALL

- Will follow shortly after the recruitment call.
 - ▣ Within 5 to 10 days; if longer they are probably not all that serious or they have other candidates.
- Resume Driven / Job Description Driven
 - ▣ Be ready to give an overview of your experience / resume.
 - ▣ Have a highlighted copy of the job description in hand.
 - ▣ Be prepared to answer questions that match your resume to the job description.
 - ▣ Focus on you highlighted positive skills.
 - ▣ Don't act like you know everything, unless you do, be realistic.
 - ▣ NO CODE – But expect high level concept questions.

The In-Person Interview - HR

□ Possible HR Section

- ▣ Relax – Focus on non-development skills, personality, communication, teamwork, and leadership.
- ▣ Unless you really screw up this person has no decision making in your hiring.

□ Forms and Formalities

- ▣ Personality Tests, IQ Tests, Background Checks, Credit Checks, Drug Tests.
- ▣ Be prepared with paperwork.
 - ID, Social Security Card, Previous Paystub or W2, List of references

The In-Person Interview - Technical

- Usually More Fit than Function
 - ▣ Meet the team, they will be the ones who decide.
 - ▣ Remember they are more scared of you than you are of them.
 - ▣ They don't want it to be awkward, so they will help.
- Focus on what you can do for them.
 - ▣ Will start off with the same things as the Technical Call: Review your Resume, Take about the Job Description, Discuss the Company.
 - ▣ Will progress into usually predefined list of questions. Get the answers online before you go. (Developers are LAZY even more so when they interview.)
 - ▣ It could end here, they will stare at each other and ask if there is anything else to ask. OR it won't!!!! – The Test.

THE TEST - LOGIC

- Personality / Logic Test
 - ▣ Hardly ever done well, someone looked it up online.
 - ▣ Why are manholes round, light switches and such.
 - ▣ They just want to see your thought process.
- How to Not FAIL
 - ▣ Research the questions online
 - ▣ Even if you know the answer don't answer right away walk it through.
 - ▣ If they ask you something you don't know just work through it for a maximum of 2 – 3 minutes talk it out.

The Test – BAD TESTS

□ The CODE Test – BAD VERSION

- These guys are just trying to make it as hard as possible.
 - There is a reason and it is not a good thing.
 - Do your best – but rethink wanting to work there.
- Here is some generic code find the bug.
- Please write the pseudo-code to sort a linked list.
- Please write us a memory allocator.
- Study Code Tests Online Before you Go

□ The CODE Test – WORSE VERSION

- Thanks for coming in oh and BTW we need you to take this online test. You know D# right?

The Test – GOOD Tests

□ The CODE Test – GOOD VERSION

- These guys want you to wow them a bit, but they don't want you to fail either.
- Here is a laptop with internet access.
- Please give us a program that does A, B, C.
- Using these Technologies.
- We will give you 1 hour to do it, see you in a bit.

□ How to not FAIL

- Hello Worlds on technology you don't know before you go.
- Post your pre-code online to reference, pull down if you can.
- If your completely lost look for code examples online.

Closing the Technical Interview

The Biggest Question in the Interview!

- Do you have any questions for us?
 - ▣ YES Always Have a List.
 - ▣ This could be the longest portion of the interview.
 - ▣ Ask Questions That Highlight You As An Answer...
 - What technologies are you looking at for the future?
 - How do you see the future of your team and your Product Roadmap?
 - How does this position fit in that vision?
 - What challenges do you see on a day to day basis?
 - How can this new position help with those challenges?

INTERVIEW with the BIG BOSS

- If you make it here your probably in.
- This is a sanity check to make sure the team is not crazy.
- Focus on your future, goals, aspirations, but stay a bit grounded.
- Talk about your past successes, and accomplishments, focus on results.
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years.
- Don't tell him you want his job...

THE Aftermath

- The Thank You Email.
 - ▣ Don't be a Stalker.
 - ▣ If they gave you a business card use it.
- The Recruiter is your conduit, don't ask questions about the future to anyone else?
- What are the next steps? Ask the Recruiter.