

Notes from Google Interview Presentation

MPACE

12-11-14

Cracking the Google Code. Technical Interviews are stressful. They do theirs in a one-on-one format. The goal is to have the candidate find a solution using code. They must identify and solve the problem. They are assessing basic skills, technical ability, problem solving, the candidate's Googliness, communication skills. The interviewer is not looking for the end answer; they are trying to get an understanding of how you think.

The process involves 2-5 technical interviews for 45 minutes each, either by phone or in person. The person should code in their strongest programming language. If doing a phone interview be familiar with Google docs. In person interviews will only involve white boarding your answer. They have an office in Boulder, CO.

Interview preparation:

Be comfortable with diagramming raw coding looking for fundamentals. Also know algorithms, C++ Java, Python.

Suggest getting out of class experience through clubs, programming competitions, Hack-a-thons, Code Jams. Check out the Google Summer of Code and Code Jams. Academic research and open source projects are also good experiences to have.

Review the core computer science fundamentals data structure, algorithms, trees, sorting etc. Practice writing code, use the language you are most familiar with; white board and use Google docs. Practice in person, do not use pseudo code.

You can read more about the Google interview experience on line. Use any connections you have in Google to ask about their experience. Let the recruiter know if you know someone in Google, or worked with someone.

They do offer Google technical interview coaching sessions on Hangout, another good resource is Guide for Technical Development Programming Pearls by John Bentley.

The Interview itself:

Short Introductions

The meat of the interview is the technical assessment.

Candidate can ask questions

The question posed will be a complicated question. They do not use puzzle questions anymore. They are looking to see how the candidate thinks about complicated questions. The question can be scaled to

any candidate to allow for engineering tradeoffs and they can add on or switch focus in the question. The ability to scale the answer is also important.

They want the candidate to take a deep dive into the question. It may take less than 10 minutes to get to the solution, or may take 45 min. and still not be done.

Candidates should think out loud, use language syntax.

They are evaluating how the candidate can solve problems, analyze in depth, and evaluate a solution, all while talking them through your processes.

You can goggle a sample interview on Google.

Preparing for the interview:

Eat, sleep, personal hygiene

Can wear your favorite jeans and lucky shirt.

Don't drink too much caffeine before the interview!

You will interview with 2-5 different people separately.

They will be fully engaged they want to hire you.

Don't get defensive when a suggestion is made, will try to steer you back to a solution. TECHNICAL HUMILITY IS IMPORTANT!!!!

Many people interview once or twice before they get hired. It is not an all or nothing proposition. Have fun and enjoy the process.

Sample Question

FACE CAFÉ

Write code to figure out if these are anagrams

Ask questions to clarify the question if needed

State your assumptions within the question

Think out loud

Test the code

Expect follow up questions from the interviewer, is it easy or hard to scale the answer.

They will take a photo of your white board

Quick Q&A at the end. They do not Google their candidates.

Each interview starts with a clean slate; interviewers don't trade feedback about you.

Lunch is an entirely SOCIAL event; NO feedback is submitted from lunch. It is normal to feel like you bombed one of the 2-5 interviews.

An independent committee collects the separate feedback from the interviewers and reviews the candidate, including any previous interviews you might have done with Google. They evaluating the candidate to see if you are good for Google and Google would be good for you.

Schools should host mock interviews focused on coding, informal and provide group feedback. Plan opportunities for white boarding and provide available resources. Coordinate with computer science clubs, seniors help younger students, participate in different company sponsored Hack-a-thons.

Really encourage students to do a Google internship; they have a campus in Boulder.

<https://www.google.com/edu/tools-and-solutions/guide-for-technical-development/>

Google code jam events

Encourage a curriculum review to insure core courses are offered before the Jr. Year to enable students to participate in a technical interview.

Apply on-line. Email thank you to the recruiter.