Tips on Technical Interviews

Preparation

Research the company in detail. Try to gain a clear understanding of their products and services and the ways in which they organise their work. As well as demonstrating your technical capabilities the interview will also assess how well you are likely to fit in with the culture of the organisation. Review the basic principles of your course and details of any projects you have undertaken. Practice solving some problems using the knowledge gained from your course which is related to the work for which you have applied.

Questions

There are a number of areas which are likely to be the focus of questions within the interview. These include:

- Theories and processes which are relevant to the company's products. This may take the form of a problem which you would be required to solve by using the products or processes. Ensure that you have revised relevant parts of your course.
- Design work that you have done as part of your course.
- You are like to be asked about projects that you have undertaken as part of the course. You should re-familiarise yourself with projects and practice summarising them concisely. It is useful to have a structure for your answer in mind to enable you to keep it concise and focused. The **STAR** method can be effective for these questions:

   Situation: Provide brief details so the interviewer can understand the context of the project.
   Task: What was the objective/purpose?
   Action: What did you do and how?
   Result: What was the outcome? Were the objectives met? What did you learn/gain?

- You may be asked to solve a problem within the interview. This may take the form of a question, a problem to solve using a whiteboard, a design problem using software. It is important to bear in mind that they will be assessing how you approach the problem and your analytical thinking. Sometimes getting the "right" answer is less important than demonstrating your creativity and enthusiasm for the technical challenge. If you aren't sure take time to think through the problem and don't be afraid to ask questions or seek clarification.
- What subjects have you enjoyed within your course? The interviewer will be seeking evidence of your enthusiasm for the subject and the depth of your understanding. They may ask further questions to test this. Go over your notes and make sure you are familiar with the subject matter.

Remember

While the focus of the interview is on your technical skills, the interviewer will be forming an impression of your skills in other areas. Can you communicate your ideas clearly and without unnecessary jargon? The role may require you to explain technical details to customers. Providing clear, concise answers in the interview demonstrates that you are capable of communicating appropriately. Your approach to problem solving can highlight your skill as a team member or leader if you include in your answers the impact of your solution on the work of your colleagues.

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