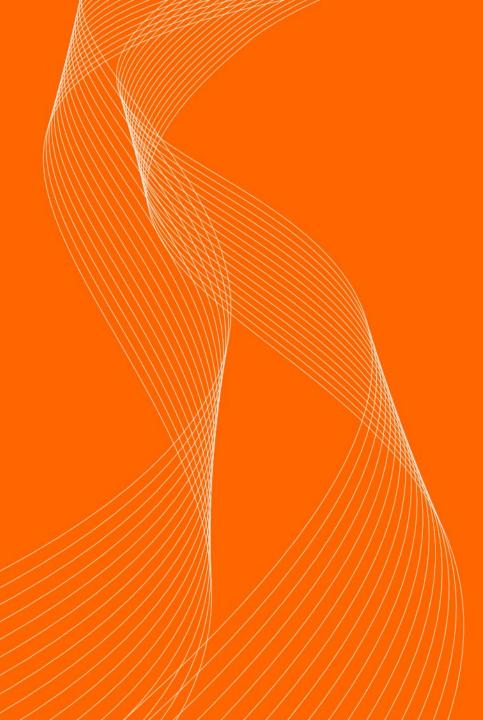# SoftServe
Ability. Agility. Advantage.

Interview Preparation

Content

- Interview / Interviewer / Interviewee
- Interview Preparation
  - Technical Part
  - Communication (English) Part
- Interview Itself
  - Dialing and Greeting
  - Self-introduction
  - FAQ
    - PM
    - QAM
    - TL
  - Tips and Tricks: Handling Tricky Questions
  - Questions to the Customer
  - Finishing Interview

Interview / Interviewer / Interviewee

Technical Interview consists of two parts:

1. General – a client tries to find out what sort of person you are, your communication skills asking general questions on the candidate's working experience, projects done, plans for future

2. Technical – a client tries to figure out whether candidate's technical skills/knowledge meet his/her requirements

Interviewer = Customer Representative

Interviewee = YOU

Main goal of interview is to provide Customer with the answers he / she wants to hear.

"My short-term goal is to bluff my way through this job interview. My long-term goal is to invent a time machine so I can come back and change everything I've said so far."

Interview Preparation: General Part

Preparation of the candidate for general part of interview in terms of communication is done by:

- English Department – English language
- Engagement Team – tips and hints for the interview

The information you should have before the interview:

- information about the customer (website, customer profile, names of the interviewers, team who is already working with this customer)
- information about interview subject (technology, project role, project overview)
- information about interview schedule (at least approximate date)

This information is provided during kick-off meeting / call with the candidate and Engagement Manager

Interview Preparation: Technical Part

Preparation of the candidate for technical interview is done by:

- SDO Competence groups – for in-house technologies (Java, .NET, C++ etc)

- R&D – for new technologies

- self-education – as addition to regular trainings

Interview Itself: Dialing and Greeting

- Make sure nothing will distract you during the interview – if needed reserve the meeting room / switch off the cell phone / turn down the music

- Have your resume printed out and ready by your eyes together with all needed material

- Dial the # as provided in the dialing directions in Outlook appointment

- When you're the first to connect to the conference room, you will hear music. When somebody joins, you'll hear the special sound and the music will stop. If there's no music, then somebody is already in the conf room.

- Introduce yourself and wait for introduction of the guests: "Hello. This is Ivan Petrenko from SoftServe, Ukraine."

- Greet everybody after the introduction and wait for the questions

Tips:

- *8 10 – is dialed before the direct international number

- Phone code of USA / Canada is 1 (so dial *8 10 1 phone number to reach USA)

- 1999 – is the internal SoftServe # for the toll free # +1-866-8906476

- Smile when introducing – your voice tone will change and it will tune interview on positive wave

Interview Itself: Self-introduction

In 99% of interviews the first questions are: "Please introduce yourself" or "Please tell us something about your background" or "Please tell us few words about your experience".

Self-introduction should show that you're the best suited person for this role / project:

▪ tell about your experience in the technologies customer is interested in

▪ tell about your experience as a Project Role you're interviewed for

Tips:

- have the self-introduction written down by your eyes but DO NOT read it (since it's heard at once). Just learn it by heart

- do not use the same wording as in your resume – customer already has it. Use synonyms and provide additional details not covered in resume

- Avoid phrase: "Let me introduce myself" 😊 - it's used too frequently by your co-workers.

- It can be tough to know when to stop talking. If your nerves are high and your blood is flowing, you can easily make the mistake of saying too much. Make sure to speak slowly and articulately. When you have answered the question, let the interviewer know that you are through. Use phrases that will help to understand that interviewer is still with you: "Does it answer your question?" / "Should I continue or maybe you have other questions?"

- Do not start with "My name is…" if you already talked with the customer and were introduced to him 😊

- You are introducing your own experience but not your hiring history, that's why do not stress "I joined SoftServe 2 months ago" / "When I worked in ZZZ, I participated in several projects" etc

FAQ: PM role

Project Manager should prove his / her experience in managing projects SIMILAR to the customer's needs.

e.g. If customer's team has 3 members, then you should stress your experience in micromanagement but not overwhelm the customer with your recent project with 50+ people inside. If customer is interested in Agile projects, name them first in your experience list.

- What methodology did you use in your last project?

- What projects do you enjoy most – done by agile or waterfall models?

- How do you manage low performers?

- If you were taken for this position, what your next steps will be? (ramp-up plan)

- What do you think about split / mixed / distributed teams?

Tips:

- PM should show him/herself as a proactive and self-confident person – ask questions, provide suggestions from your experience. Do not just answer the questions interviewer asked, but give additional details: "We faced the similar issue on the other project and solve it by XXX". "On your site I saw that you're using the YYY tool. We use it too together with ZZZ to mitigate the possible risks".

- Make sure your answers are STRUCTURED – provide the direct answers to direct questions and only then extend your answer: "Well, maybe this is out of the scope of this conversation, but I would like to share my experience in QQQ" / "I suppose you'll be interested in NNN as well since it's commonly used in this industry"

FAQ: QAL

QAL should show the maturity of QA processes at SoftServe (e.g. quality assurance vs quality control, metrics, ramp-up plan for QA process establishment).

- Did you work in a team where QAs were on different sides?
- What type of analytical work do usually you do?
- How would you test the cash machine?
- Give 10 test cases for Notepad.
- Imagine that you have a test suite of 400 test cases that are usually being performed during 5 days. If you have only 2 days to perform them, how will you decide what test cases to be performed and what can be omitted?
- Do you have experience in White Box testing?
- How would you handle the situation when developer didn't want to fix the bug you had reported?
- What does make a good regression test?
- Have you done any automated testing? Who was responsible for selecting test cases for automated testing?
- How would you return all records from "employee" table? How would you update the data in the "employee" table, "first name" column with "record_id"=12?
- What are the typical things that you manage and coordinate?
- How many resource have you been managed?
- What do you think about mix teams? (some resources in Ukraine, some in USA)
- What is typically the ratio between the QA and development staff resources?

FAQ: TL

TL should show that he / she is not just a Senior Developer but a person who can advise / consult / manage people / take decisions and responsibility for the consequences.

Questions list is the mix of technical and managerial.

- How do you establish code quality in the team?

- What technology / programming language do you like most? Why?

- How do you use knowledge transfer from the customer to the dev team? What information do you need to start the project?

Tips:

- you like the "most" technology selected by the customer

- "I don't know / Never did etc" are FORBIDDEN! If customer asks about technology you never used before, you may tell: "I didn't have a chance to use it in real projects, but I have investigated it and did some prototyping using it. On our projects we usually use ZZZ for this reasons". Then do the brief overview of ZZZ technology. But make sure that this information is relevant and customer is ready to hear about it

Tips and Tricks: Handling Tricky Questions

Main rule for handling tricky questions:

ANSWER TRUTH BUT NOT ALL TRUTH ☺

- When did you graduate?
- If you're only 22, how can you have 5 years of development experience?
- How long did all projects from your list last?
- We heard that you have several offices in Ukraine. In what office are you located?
- Do you know other people from the team?
- When did you join SoftServe?
- Did you participate in these 2 projects simultaneously?
- What do you do when the projects ends and new one haven't yet arrived?

Tips:

- It's forbidden in USA to work full time while studying. To answer all the questions about your graduation and experience, tell that you started working and gaining the experience still being in university

- If your answer may sound risky for the customer (e.g. you are in Dnipro and all dev team is in Lviv or you're 22 assigned as a PM etc), be ready to provide mitigation plan at once (E.g. "We work effectively with the development teams overseas, that's why it's absolutely no problem to cooperate with the team located in other Ukrainian city. We have all means of communications for this: regular conf calls, web-sessions, biz trips etc". "Even though I'm only 22, I've already managed several mid-size projects with 10 people in each team. I passed internal and external trainings for this that's why it won't cause any issues for this very case")

- Do not stress the risky information to avoid tricky questions (e.g. if you're only 22, do not start your self introduction with the words: I graduated from the university last year"/ If you're from the remote office, don't tell that "the weather is great here in Rivne" etc)

Other Tips and Tricks

- use "issue" instead of "problem"

- do not start your answer "I don't know", I have never thought about this", "I have never used it"… Paraphrase it "Oh, that's interesting, let me think…"

- speak in a positive tone: interview is just a conversation of several smart people but not a custodial examination

- when you have finished answering the question, let the interviewer know this asking "Have I missed anything?", "Is that the answer to your question? - but do not keep silence.

- use words that shows your interest in the subject: "Sounds interesting / exciting / challenging". Make sure that your intonation corresponds to the phrase you say ☺

- do not tell project names while talking about your experience – use code names instead

- sometimes changes in the resume are made (changes in the project order, dates, tools & technologies etc) – make sure you are aware and agree with all changes

- do not diminish your knowledge, skills, experience, do not judge yourself, and do not criticize "Maybe I am not very proficient…", " Unfortunately I have a little experience in

Finishing Interview

Interviewer is a person who decides that interview is finished.

In 95% of interviews the last question from the interviewer is "Do you have any questions?"

The right answer is "YES!".

Tips:

- have a list of questions (2-3) prepared by hand
- make sure that these questions were not asked before (by Account Executive / PM / EM / other interviewees)
- do not ask general questions: "What exactly do you do?"
- do not ask questions that are reviewed in the site info: "Where are your headquarters located?"
- ask questions that really interest you
- when questions are answered, tell that there are no questions left at this moment so that customer can end the interview
- thank everybody for their attention ("Thank you for your time / I enjoy talking to you / Looking forward to working with you etc") and say goodbye

Thank You and Good Luck! ☺