Software developer interview questions: what to ask and why

Although challenging, when done correctly, hiring the right software developer can add significant value to your business. To help you find the best tech talent, we've prepared a list of software developer interview questions covering technical, problem-solving, and behavioral points.

Technical Questions

These questions would help you assess the candidate's level of proficiency, the diversity of tech and programming tools they're familiar with, their overall understanding of software development, and how they will fit with your development requirements.

- What programming languages? Which ones are you good at?
- What frameworks have you used in your past projects?
- What databases are you familiar with?
- Do you do full-stack development? Or just backend/frontend?
- What do you look at when doing a code review?
- What project management tools have you used?
- What skills and technologies are you the most interested in improving upon or learning?
- How do you stay up-to-date with the latest technology developments?

Problem-solving Questions

Other than having the necessary technical know-how, you'd also want to hire a developer that is quick on their feet. These questions are aimed to help you gain insights into how they analyze, evaluate, and create solutions and if they learn from success and failures.

- What do you do first when creating a new project?
- Describe a challenging project you worked on? What was your role in it and how did you help solve the issues? What are your takeaways from this project?
- How about a successful project that you worked on? What was your role in it and what are the things that you did right on the project?
- What do you do when you're faced with a coding problem you don't know how to solve?
- Tell me about a time the scope of a project changed midway through. How did you respond?
- Have you ever done improvements on infrastructures or processes? Walk me through how you did it and why.

Behavioral Questions

Lastly, you'd want to ensure that your software developer fits your company both technically and culturally. These questions will help you understand what motivates them, keeps them engaged, and how they work with others.

- Do you have a passion project you're working on? Can you share a little about it?
- How would the developers/project managers you've worked with describe you?

- If I spoke with your previous boss, in which areas would he or she say you need improvement?
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with another team member. How did you resolve it?
- What's most important to you in a new job?
- What's your favorite part of being a software developer? Least favorite?

Additional Tips

During the interview, you'd also want to pay attention to the following:

- **Communication**: Other than articulating their thoughts well, observe if they listen and truly understand your questions. In instances that they don't, do they make an effort to clarify? You'd want to work with someone who ensures their on the same page before executing to avoid miscommunications.
- **Enthusiasm**: Are they passive and disengaged? Or are they eager to know more about your company and what you do? Which part of the interview did they seem most passionate about? Did they ask about possible next steps? This can be a good indicator of how much they want to be a part of your team.
- **Adaptability**: Do they prefer structure or flexibility? How did they perform during high-stress situations? How do they react to change? In a space that's constantly evolving, being able to gracefully embrace change is just as important as any hard skill.

Also Read: All Your Need-to-knows When Hiring a Software Developer