

The Job Hunt



Admin



- Quiz?
- Lets talk about soft skills episode 446

The Job Market



- Current job market has some new/unusual features
- Layoffs have returned to normal level
- Hiring is 'interesting' though
- Student examples?

The Job Market



- Current job market has some new/unusual features
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- What is a 'phantom job' or 'ghost job'
 - A relatively recent term

The Job Market



- Current job market has some new/unusual features
- Layoffs have returned to normal level
- Hiring is 'interesting' though
- What is a 'phantom job'
 - A relatively recent term
- Atlantic magazine refers to 'frozen job market' with low unemployment and low hiring

Skills mismatch?



- Some discussion of a 'skills mismatch'
 - Employers want
 - Communication skills
 - Teamwork
 - Critical thinking/problem solving
 - Lifetime learning/curiosity/always-be-learning
 - Referred to as either 'soft skills' or 'professional skills'
 - See <https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-gap-in-perceptions-of-new-grads-competency-proficiency-and-resources-to-shrink-it> and
 - https://www.hult.edu/blog/wi_skills_survey/
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Coffee cup test



- Sometimes interviewers start unusual ‘tests’
 - “Stress test” from the 2000s
 - Microsoft “did you learn test”
 - And what is the “coffee cup test” that is so popular in the last year or so?

Coffee cup test



- Sometimes interviewers start unusual ‘tests’
 - “Stress test” from the 2000s
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 - And what is the “coffee cup test” that is so popular in the last year or so?
 - Offer candidate coffee/tea/etc early in the interview, when interview is over, see what they do with the cup
 - Those who just leave are too lazy/devoid of social skills to work there – don’t hire
 - Those who clean up or ask what to do with the cup remain in the running

Salt and pepper test



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Salt and pepper test



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 - Take the candidate to a lunch interview (at a place they make sure candidate has never been)
 - If they salt/pepper/hot sauce the food without tasting the food
 - Then don't hire.
- What are they checking (what is the reasoning) here?

Salt and pepper test



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 - Take the candidate to a lunch interview (at a place they make sure candidate has never been)
 - If they salt/pepper/hot sauce the food without tasting the food
 - Then don’t hire.
- What are they checking (what is the reasoning) here?
 - Is candidate so stuck in their ways that they don’t check the current state first
 - Assumption: that will carry over to their work behaviors

Alphabet Test



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Alphabet Test



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Alphabet Test



- What is the Alphabet test?
 - Hand candidate a pen and paper and ask the candidate to write the alphabet by hand
 - What is this intended to check?
 - First: Can the candidate actually write
 - Second: Can the candidate use the alphabet (which has profound implications for many many jobs, including developers who do string comparisons)
 - Third: Can the candidate do a simple task without complaining.
 - This last reason was more controversial

The tech interview stages



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 - Higher salaries than the median
 - Companies need high skill employees.
 - Most expensive thing to do in states like MA?
 -

The tech interview stages



- Every company is different but tech hiring tends to be a long process
 - Higher salaries than the median
 - Companies need high skill employees.
 - Most expensive thing to do in states like MA?
 - Firing someone – especially a high salary individual.
 - So most companies try very hard to hire only ‘highly qualified individuals’
 - With the exception of that short period from late 2020 through very early 2022

The tech interview stages



- Every company is different but
 - tech hiring tends to be a long process
 - Sample tech hiring progression: middle often in arbitrary order
 - HR interview (often by phone) : do you hit the bare minimum personality to go on
 - Dev phone interview: do you seem to have any skills at all
 - Take home test: can you work on a non-trivial project
 - Used to be paid.
 - In person interview (possibly two – possibly longer) – usually with devs
 - White board coding
 - Problems that reduce to algorithms
 - Pair programming
 - Meet the team (ask them questions)
 - Possible interview by management

Networking



- What do we mean by networking in this context?

Networking



- What do we mean by networking in this context?
 - Meet people, talk to people, get to know them
 - Better yet in a technical activity
 - Was always the best way to get a job
 - In the world of “AI slop” is nearly the only way.
- Who are your first natural networking partners?

Networking



- What do we mean by networking in this context?
 - Meet people, talk to people, get to know them
 - Better yet in a technical activity
 - Was always the best way to get a job
 - In the world of “AI slop” is nearly the only way.
- Who are your first natural networking partners?
 - The recent BSU grads that you made friends (or at least worked with) earlier in your major.

Other networking



- Where else can you do technical networking?

Other networking



- Where else can you do technical networking?
 - Meetups:
 - It seems like meetup.com is still the place for technical meetups
 - <https://www.meetup.com/home/> (eventbrite is trying to break in)
 - Don't bother with online ones – not really worth it for the 'hallway track'
 - Hackathons:
 - Natural showcase of what you are capable of.
 - Some hackathons in the greater Boston area – some false matches
 - <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/ma--boston/hackathon/>
 - Wider: <https://devpost.com/hackathons>
 - Job Fairs
 - Not as good, but still – make a good impression and get through the AI screen
 - Thursday, April 3, 2025 12:00– 3:00pm Tinsley Athletic Center Gym. T/R Class will move there for that day signing in will be a quiz

plan



- If you have a company that you want to work for
 - Maybe find some of their employees on linkedIn
 - See if they post about attending or running meetups – prioritize going to those meetups.
 - **DON'T STALK A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER**
 - But, what they put on linkedin is intended to be public.

A reason companies like networking



- Companies like people they know are real
 - Dec 2024: it comes out that North Koreans were working remote US dev jobs using stolen identities
 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdnz3elwzvo>
 - In 2022 (height of remote everything in tech) the person who took the job was not the one who (remote) interviewed:
 - <https://www.askamanager.org/2022/01/the-new-hire-who-showed-up-is-not-the-same-person-we-interviewed.html>

Dress for Success



- When you show up for an in person interview, you want to dress for success
 - If you can find out what the normal work attire is, (here your networking will help you) then
 - Dress one level up
 - If everyone wears battered T-Shirts, wear a polo shirt.
 - If everyone wears polo shirts, wear a button up shirt.
 - Please please: If you wear a sport/suit jacket tuck in the shirt under it!!
 - Ties? complicated
 - And of course – the very basics:
 - <https://blog.solomonpage.com/2016/06/10/interviewing-101-attire-hygiene-checklist>

Pre-employment checks



- Lots of companies will do a check before you get too far along in the interview process
 - Like what?

Pre-employment checks



- Lots of companies will do a check before you get too far along in the interview process
 - Probably including
 - Check your github – maybe try a project
 - only make working projects public,
 - Check your linkedin
 - Are you in network with anyone they could ask you about?
 - Check any and all social media that they can find.
 - Former student objected: “What I do on my time is none of their business”
 - It depends on how far up the hierarchy you are – high enough and you make the company look back eg “BSU employee does bad thing”
 - <https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/taco-bell-executive-fired-after-drunkenly-assaulting-uber/252442>
 - <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/can-employer-fire-me-getting- DUI-while-i-off-work.html>
 - Google you – see what comes up – don't have a name doppelganger

Background checks



- Those pre-employment checks can be done without asking or telling you.
- But if you get really close to employment, will likely ask you to sign an agreement for a background check
 - Use one of several companies that will look into data
 - Sex offender registries
 - Felony convictions
 - Bankruptcies
 - And if defense, security clearance screening
 - Will talk to a bunch of people in your life looking for vulnerabilities.
 - Credit rating etc.

What did I miss?



- What else about hiring these days did I miss.