26 Engineering Manager Interview Questions & Answers

Q1: Describe Your Management Philosophy

Hiring managers want to understand your leadership style, how you motivate teams, and whether your approach fits the company culture.

Sample Answer

"My management philosophy centers on trust, clarity, and growth. I believe in setting clear expectations, giving engineers ownership of their work, and removing roadblocks so they can do their best. I stay hands-on with team health by regularly checking in, not just on progress, but on morale and engagement. I value transparency—both in successes and in challenges—so the team feels informed and empowered. I also put emphasis on coaching: helping engineers develop not just their technical skills, but also their ability to collaborate, lead, and communicate. I've found that by treating people as individuals and investing in their goals, you create stronger outcomes for both the team and the business. At the same time, I keep a close eye on delivery and alignment with business goals, ensuring we ship high-impact work and improve velocity over time."

Q2: What Do You Measure When Evaluating the Performance of DEVs? How Do You Measure Those Things.

Hiring managers ask this question to understand how you define success, set expectations, and balance technical output with team dynamics. They want to see if

you prioritize metrics that drive real impact—like code quality, collaboration, ownership, and delivery consistency—rather than just raw output. Your answer reveals your leadership style and how you support both individual growth and team goals.

Sample Answer

“When evaluating developer performance, I focus on a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators. I look at code quality, communication, ownership, and delivery consistency. For code quality, I use code reviews and metrics like defect rates or how often work requires rework. For delivery, I track sprint commitments versus completions over time—not to penalize but to spot trends and support the team in removing blockers.

I also pay close attention to how developers collaborate—do they contribute to discussions, help others, and provide clear updates? Tools like 360 feedback, one-on-ones, and team retros give insight into those areas. I measure growth by tracking how developers take on new challenges, learn from feedback, and increase their scope of impact.

I try to make sure metrics never feel punitive. They’re part of a bigger picture that includes context and individual goals. My aim is to help each engineer improve while supporting the team in delivering high-quality, valuable software.”

Q3: Tell Me About a Time You Scaled a System?

Hiring managers ask this question to assess your technical leadership, architectural decision-making, and experience managing system growth under increasing load or demand. They want to know how you evaluate scaling needs, lead teams through changes, and ensure performance and reliability. It also reveals your communication skills, especially in cross-functional collaboration. At the Engineering Manager level, they're looking for someone who can balance strategic thinking with practical execution.

Sample Answer

"I was once part of a team responsible for building a customer-facing analytics platform that initially served a few enterprise clients. As adoption grew, our monolithic backend couldn’t keep up with increased data ingestion and query volume. I led the initiative to re-architect the system, starting with decoupling core services and moving to a microservices model. We also introduced event-driven data processing using Kafka, and migrated our databases to a sharded architecture to support higher throughput.

I collaborated closely with product, DevOps, and data engineering teams to align timelines and ensure minimal disruption. To manage risk, we rolled out changes incrementally and set up automated performance benchmarking. The result was a system that could handle 10x the traffic with 40% lower latency. More importantly, the team gained confidence in handling scale, and we put monitoring in place to proactively catch performance issues. This project not only improved the product but also matured our engineering practices across the board."

Q4: Tell Me About a Time You Gave Feedback/Constructive Criticism to a Direct Report

Hiring managers ask this to gauge your leadership style, emotional intelligence, and ability to coach others. They want to know if you can deliver feedback in a way that motivates rather than demoralizes. They're also looking for signs that you understand how to tailor feedback based on individual needs. For Engineering Managers, this is especially important because you're expected to elevate your team's performance while fostering a healthy, collaborative culture.

Sample Answer

"One of my senior engineers was consistently delivering high-quality code, but during code reviews, several teammates noted that his tone came off as dismissive. I pulled him aside for a one-on-one and shared that while his technical contributions were strong, the feedback he gave others was sometimes perceived as condescending. I made sure to frame it as an opportunity for leadership growth and gave examples of how collaborative feedback could help build trust across the team. We also discussed some techniques like asking clarifying questions instead of making flat judgments. He appreciated the directness and agreed to adjust his approach. Over the next few weeks, I saw noticeable improvement—he started offering more constructive suggestions and even mentored a junior engineer. His relationships with teammates improved, and it positively impacted team dynamics. That experience reinforced how thoughtful, well-timed feedback can drive both individual growth and stronger team cohesion, especially in engineering environments where collaboration is key."

Q5: When Faced with an Underperforming Dev, What Steps Do You as a Manager Take to Rectify the Situation?

Interviewers ask this question to assess your leadership style, communication skills, and ability to handle performance issues constructively. They want to see if you can balance empathy with accountability while guiding a developer toward improvement. Your answer also reveals how you promote team productivity and morale in challenging situations.

Sample Answer

"I start by seeking to understand the root cause. I meet with the developer privately and ask open-ended questions to learn what might be impacting their performance—whether it's unclear expectations, personal issues, or skill gaps. I clarify what "good" looks like in their role and outline the gap between current and expected performance. From there, I create a support plan that includes specific goals, timelines, and resources, like pairing with a peer, targeted learning, or more frequent check-ins. I stay supportive but also firm about what needs to change. Regular feedback and encouragement help keep momentum going. If there's improvement, I continue to coach and reinforce that progress. If not, I work closely with HR and leadership on next steps, but I always make sure the employee has had a fair shot with a clear plan and

ample support. My goal is to help them succeed—but not at the cost of team health or delivery."

Q6: What Does Excellence Look Like for an Engineer?

Hiring managers want to understand your standards, values, and leadership expectations. They want to see how you define high performance—not just in technical skills, but in communication, ownership, and collaboration. Your answer gives insight into how you assess talent, support growth, and build a strong engineering culture.

Sample Answer

"Excellence in an engineer goes beyond writing clean code. It means consistently delivering value through thoughtful, scalable solutions that align with business goals. Excellent engineers communicate clearly, ask the right questions, and collaborate well with both technical and non-technical partners. They take initiative, spot problems before they grow, and look for ways to improve systems or processes. They also care about the long-term health of the codebase—not just shipping fast, but shipping sustainably. An excellent engineer has a growth mindset and actively seeks feedback and learning opportunities. They support teammates, contribute to a positive team culture, and act with a sense of ownership. Technical skills matter, but I look just as closely at how someone impacts the team's velocity, decision-making, and trust. That balance of impact, curiosity, and reliability is what I consider a mark of excellence."

Q7: How Do You Approach Estimating Timelines?

This evaluates your judgment around scoping work, managing risk, and setting realistic expectations with stakeholders.

Sample Answer

"I approach estimating timelines by breaking work into small, well-defined pieces and involving the team in the process. The people doing the work often have the clearest sense of what's involved, so I make sure estimates come from them. We use past velocity and technical complexity to guide our estimates, and we factor in unknowns, testing, and review time—not just implementation. I encourage the team to include buffers for risk and avoid overly optimistic assumptions. For high-uncertainty projects, I prefer giving a range rather than a single date. I communicate early and often with stakeholders, flagging changes as soon as they arise. I also track how estimates compare to actuals, using retros to improve future accuracy. Estimation isn't about being perfect—it's about giving decision-makers enough clarity to plan, while staying flexible when real-world complexity shows up."

Q8: How Do You Coach an Underperforming Team Member?

Interviewers ask this question to understand your leadership approach, emotional intelligence, and ability to handle difficult situations without damaging team morale. They want to see if you can provide constructive feedback, identify root causes, and create a path for improvement while maintaining a supportive environment. This helps them assess whether you can lead both high-performing and struggling team members effectively.

Sample Answer

"When coaching someone underperforming, I start by focusing on clarity and support. First, I meet privately to discuss what I'm seeing and listen for context—maybe there are blockers I'm unaware of. Then I clearly outline where expectations aren't being met, using specific examples. Together, we create a short-term improvement plan with clear goals and a support structure—like pairing, mentoring, or additional training. I set up regular check-ins to track progress and adjust as needed. During these, I celebrate wins and stay honest about what still needs work. My coaching style is straightforward but empathetic. I try to make it clear I want them to succeed, and I'm investing time to help them do so. If things improve, we revisit their development goals and keep building. If not, we move toward a more formal performance plan. Either way, the goal is to give them clarity, tools, and a path forward."

Q9: How Do You Approach Identifying and Accelerating Career Progression for Top Performing Engineers?

Interviewers ask this question to understand how you support the growth and retention of high-performing engineers. They want to see if you can recognize talent, create development opportunities, and align individual goals with team and company objectives. Your response shows how well you balance technical leadership with mentorship and long-term team building.

Sample Answer

"For high performers, I focus on understanding what motivates them and aligning their growth with both their interests and team goals. I start by having candid conversations about their aspirations—whether they want to go deeper technically, grow into leadership, or explore cross-functional work. Once I understand that, I look for stretch opportunities: leading a complex project, mentoring others, or owning architectural decisions. I also advocate for them during calibration and promotion cycles, ensuring their impact is visible and documented. I encourage them to share knowledge across the team, which helps their influence grow. Regular feedback sessions help us track progress and adjust direction as needed. Career growth shouldn't be reactive—it should be intentional. I make sure high performers feel challenged, appreciated, and supported. When they know there's a path forward, they tend to stay more engaged and keep leveling up, which benefits the entire team."

Q10: What Kind of Metrics Have You Used to Assess Engineer Performance?

Hiring managers want to know how you evaluate impact and growth while avoiding vanity metrics. They're looking for a balance of objectivity and empathy, and how your assessment methods support team development and business outcomes.

Sample Answer

"I focus on a combination of qualitative and quantitative metrics. Quantitatively, I look at cycle time, PR turnaround, incident ownership, and sprint predictability. But metrics alone don't tell the whole story. I supplement them with regular one-on-ones and 360° feedback to understand how each engineer collaborates, communicates, and grows technically. I also track how effectively they contribute to architecture discussions, mentor others, and solve business problems. For example, one engineer reduced deployment time by 40%—but what stood out more was how they shared that approach across the team. My goal isn't to rank people, but to help them reach their potential while delivering impact. I use these insights to guide coaching conversations, not to micromanage."

Q11: How Do You Balance the Need for Autonomy in Your Team with Business Needs?

Interviewers ask this question to understand how you empower your team to work independently while still aligning their efforts with company goals and deadlines. They want to see that you can foster innovation and ownership without losing sight of priorities, accountability, or cross-functional coordination. This reflects your ability to lead with both flexibility and structure.

Sample Answer

"I encourage engineers to explore new technologies, but I frame that freedom within clear business goals. When someone wants to use a new framework, we discuss its maturity, maintainability, and alignment with long-term architecture. If the business case favors sticking with older tech for now, I'll often ask them to pilot the new tool in a non-critical context or during hack days. That way, they still grow while we protect velocity and stability. For example, when a team wanted to migrate to a new backend language, we started with internal tooling rather than customer-facing systems. That gave us real data on performance and ramp-up time. Balancing autonomy with impact helps engineers stay motivated without creating avoidable risk or tech debt."

Q12: How Do You Showcase Team Members in Anticipation of a Promotion

Hiring managers want to understand how you recognize and develop talent within your team. As an Engineering Manager, it's expected that you're not only focused on delivery but also on growing your engineers' careers. They want to hear how you advocate for

others, prepare them for greater responsibility, and help leadership feel confident in those individuals. Your answer should show both strategic thinking and people development skills.

Sample Answer

"I start by having regular career development conversations with my team members, so I understand their goals and can align them with opportunities. When I see someone who's ready to take on more, I intentionally give them projects that stretch their leadership and technical skills—like leading cross-functional initiatives or mentoring newer engineers. I document their achievements and impact over time so I can make a strong case when promotion conversations come up. I also provide visibility by inviting them to leadership syncs, demos, or decision-making meetings, so others can see their capabilities firsthand. To build trust with stakeholders, I share examples of how that team member has solved difficult problems or helped the team deliver results. When the time comes, leadership isn't just hearing my recommendation—they've already seen the person operate at the next level. That way, promotions feel like a natural next step, not a surprise. It's about setting people up to succeed before they get the title."

Q13: How Do You Balance Senior Leadership Mandated Initiatives vs Engineering-driven Initiatives?

They want to see how you advocate for your team while aligning with broader company goals. This speaks to your influence, prioritization skills, and business empathy.

Sample Answer

"I start by understanding the intent behind leadership's initiatives. If it's revenue-driven or tied to key metrics, I make sure my team understands the business context, so they're invested, not just compliant. At the same time, I protect space for engineering-driven work like refactoring or performance improvements by including them in quarterly planning. I've found success by linking technical initiatives to business outcomes. For instance, we prioritized a caching layer rebuild not just because it was messy, but because it reduced latency and churn. I surface engineering efforts in leadership updates using language they value—risk reduction, scalability, customer experience. That balance helps us earn trust and push forward both streams of work without one getting sidelined."

Q14: How Do You Shield Your Team from Unreasonable Deadlines? What if the Deadline is Critical for the Business to Continue Operating (E.g. European Union Compliance)?

Interviewers ask this question to assess your ability to balance team advocacy with business priorities. They want to understand how you protect your team from burnout while still being pragmatic and adaptable when the stakes are high. Your response

shows how you handle pressure, manage expectations, and make thoughtful decisions under constraints.

Sample Answer

"When deadlines feel unrealistic, I work to reframe the scope. I meet with stakeholders to understand the "why" behind the deadline—is it legal, market-driven, or internal pressure? Then I collaborate with tech leads to define a minimum viable path. For a recent compliance deadline, we created a phase-one plan that met EU rules without re-architecting everything upfront. That gave the team a manageable goal without burnout. I also make it a point to ask leadership what can be paused or deprioritized to meet the deadline. If we can't reduce scope, I focus on transparency: telling the team why it matters, what support we have, and how we'll recover time after. It's about partnership, not protectionism. Shielding doesn't mean hiding the reality—it means creating clarity and a path forward that respects the team."

Q15: How Do You Foster a Positive Team Culture?

Culture drives retention, collaboration, and performance. They want to see if you're intentional about how your team works together, not just what they produce.

Sample Answer

"I create a culture built on trust, clarity, and shared ownership. That starts with psychological safety—encouraging people to ask questions, raise concerns, and admit mistakes without fear. I also make sure we celebrate wins—both big and small—whether it's a successful launch or someone mentoring a teammate. Regular rituals like retros, lunch-and-learns, and casual Slack check-ins keep us connected. I encourage engineers to participate in decisions, not just execute tickets, which builds pride in the work. For example, we once rewrote a roadmap after engineers raised key performance concerns. That kind of feedback loop makes people feel seen and respected. Culture isn't just about vibes—it's built through consistent action and leadership modeling the behaviors we want."

Q16: Describe a Time You Managed Conflict Between Team Members.

Interviewers ask this question to assess your leadership, emotional intelligence, and ability to maintain a productive team environment. They want to see how you handle interpersonal challenges, resolve issues fairly, and keep projects on track without letting conflict disrupt progress. This question also reveals your communication style and how well you foster collaboration.

Sample Answer

"In one project, two senior engineers disagreed over which framework to use—one favored stability, the other prioritized speed. The tension started affecting sprint progress. I called a meeting with both, giving each person uninterrupted time to explain

their perspective. I then reframed the conversation around our broader goals: meeting a tight launch deadline while ensuring maintainability. We agreed to use the faster framework for initial rollout with a plan to gradually refactor using the stable solution post-launch. Both engineers felt heard, and the decision gave us a clear path forward. The project shipped on time, and that conversation actually improved their working relationship. To me, managing conflict is about creating space for transparency and guiding the team toward shared outcomes rather than individual wins."

Q17: How Do You Balance Technical Debt vs. Feature Delivery?

Interviewers want to assess your ability to make thoughtful trade-offs between long-term code quality and short-term business goals. They want to see how you prioritize work, manage stakeholder expectations, and maintain a healthy engineering culture while still delivering results. Your answer gives insight into your strategic thinking and how you lead teams through complex decisions.

Sample Answer

"I see technical debt as a cost—one that can accrue interest if left unchecked. Balancing it with feature delivery requires ongoing collaboration with product and engineering teams. At my last role, we were under pressure to ship quickly, but I noticed growing inefficiencies in our build pipeline. I negotiated with product to allocate 15% of each sprint toward reducing tech debt. We framed it as an investment in velocity, showing how small fixes improved long-term delivery speed. Over two quarters, we reduced build times by 30%, which gave us more room to innovate. I use metrics and clear narratives to explain the impact of tech debt, making it easier for stakeholders to support the right balance. It's not about perfection—it's about protecting the team's ability to deliver over time."

Q18: Tell Me About a Tough Technical Choice You Made.

Interviewers ask this question to understand how you approach complex decision-making, especially when there's no obvious right answer. They want to see how you balance trade-offs, collaborate with stakeholders, and think critically under pressure—key traits for an engineering manager responsible for both people and technical outcomes.

Sample Answer

"One time, we had to decide between rebuilding a legacy payment system or continuing to patch it. Rebuilding meant a longer timeline and more risk upfront, but patching was costing us more in terms of downtime and support. I gathered input from engineers, product managers, and QA to fully map the risks and benefits. We then ran a spike to validate our assumptions and proposed a phased rebuild that would allow gradual migration without halting feature work. It wasn't the fastest solution, but it reduced risk and helped us align cross-functional teams. I presented the plan to leadership using clear metrics, including the projected drop-in incident rates and support costs. The

choice paid off—we launched the new system within six months, with a 40% reduction in payment errors. I've learned that tough technical decisions often involve cross-functional collaboration and measured execution, not just technical expertise."

Q19: How Do You Help Engineers Develop Their Skills?

Interviewers want to understand your approach to mentorship, coaching, and team growth. They want to see if you actively invest in your team's development and how you tailor support to individual strengths and goals. This also reveals your ability to build a high-performing, future-ready engineering team.

Sample Answer

"I believe that skill growth should be intentional, visible, and tied to both individual goals and team needs. I start by understanding each engineer's aspirations—whether they want to grow as ICs or shift into leadership. Then I create development plans that include stretch projects, mentorship opportunities, and regular check-ins. For example, I paired one mid-level engineer with a senior on a high-impact backend refactor. They gained exposure to system design and later led a similar initiative. I also advocate for learning budgets and bring in lunch-and-learns when possible. Beyond formal training, I give consistent feedback and highlight growth moments during retros and 1:1s. My goal is to create an environment where engineers feel challenged, supported, and proud of their growth. When the team is learning, retention improves, and innovation thrives."

Q20: When Have You Given Tough Feedback That Improved Performance?

Interviewers want to assess your ability to lead with honesty, clarity, and empathy. They want to know if you can handle uncomfortable conversations while keeping the team motivated and productive. It also helps them evaluate your communication style and whether you focus on growth rather than blame.

Sample Answer

"One of my engineers was delivering solid code but was often unresponsive during code reviews and standups. This created friction, especially when we were on tight deadlines. In a 1:1, I framed the conversation around team impact, not blame. I shared specific examples, like delayed merges and missed context that slowed others down. I also asked how they were feeling and learned they were juggling responsibilities outside of work. We agreed on clearer expectations—responding to PRs within 24 hours and flagging when they were unavailable. I followed up weekly, and within a month, their engagement improved dramatically. The team started moving faster, and their confidence grew as they became more responsive. Giving tough feedback is never easy, but when it's paired with empathy and support, it opens the door to real improvement."

Q21: How Do You Align Priorities Across Different Teams?

Interviewers ask, “How do you align priorities across different teams?” to understand your ability to coordinate cross-functional efforts and ensure everyone is working toward shared goals. They want to see how you handle conflicting priorities, foster collaboration, and maintain clear communication across departments. This question also reveals your leadership style and how effectively you drive alignment without micromanaging.

Sample Answer

"Cross-team alignment starts with shared goals and transparency. In a previous role, my team depended on both product and infrastructure groups to deliver a new customer onboarding flow. Each team had different roadmaps and metrics. I initiated a weekly sync across leads, where we reviewed progress, clarified dependencies, and surfaced blockers. I also worked with PMs to define a shared OKR that all teams could influence. When one team faced delays, we adjusted scope rather than shifting blame, focusing on what would deliver the most value together. I kept stakeholders informed through concise status updates and dashboards. The result: the feature launched on time, and we built stronger trust between teams. Alignment isn't just about meetings—it's about creating clarity, setting realistic expectations, and being willing to adapt when things change."

Q22: What’s Your Approach to Managing Remote or Distributed Teams?

Interviewers ask this question to assess your ability to lead effectively without relying on in-person interactions. They want to understand how you maintain team cohesion, communication, accountability, and productivity across different time zones or work environments. This question also reveals your familiarity with remote collaboration tools and how you adapt your leadership style to support team members from a distance.

Sample Answer

"Managing distributed teams requires intentional structure and trust. I start by establishing shared rituals—like daily standups, virtual whiteboarding sessions, and monthly retros—to keep communication flowing. I use tools like Slack, Linear, and Loom to bridge async gaps and keep context accessible. For 1:1s, I don’t just discuss progress—I make time to check in personally and look for signs of burnout or isolation. I also rotate meeting times when the team spans time zones, so no one feels perpetually disadvantaged. To maintain alignment, I share goals and priorities in writing and celebrate wins publicly. On one project, we had engineers across four time zones and still delivered ahead of schedule because expectations were clear, feedback loops were tight, and people felt empowered. Remote teams thrive when trust, communication, and ownership are part of the culture."

Q23: How Do You Set Goals and Measure Success?

Hiring managers are checking if you're results-driven and how you connect day-to-day work with business outcomes.

Sample Answer

"I start by aligning team goals with company objectives—whether it's improving customer retention, reducing latency, or launching new features. I prefer using OKRs because they provide clarity and stretch without being rigid. For example, one goal might be "Reduce page load times by 40%," with key results tied to actual metrics like Lighthouse scores and bounce rates. I involve the team in crafting these so they feel ownership. During the quarter, we review progress bi-weekly and adapt as needed. Success isn't just about hitting numbers—it's also about team health, on-time delivery, and learning. I complement OKRs with regular retros and 1:1s to understand what's working and where support is needed. By tying goals to both outcomes and behaviors, we stay focused and motivated, even when priorities shift."

Q24: What's Your Strategy for Communicating Long-term Vision?

Interviewers ask this question to understand how well you lead with vision and purpose. They want to see if you can inspire and guide a team while keeping efforts aligned with a bigger picture. It also helps them gauge your ability to balance technical execution with strategic thinking and people management.

Sample Answer

"A strong long-term vision gives purpose to everyday work. I start by translating company-wide goals into a clear, relatable narrative for the team. For example, when our product aimed to enter a new market, I explained how each engineering initiative—like scaling infrastructure or improving onboarding—tied into that vision. I repeat this message in sprint planning, 1:1s, and team meetings to keep it front of mind. Visual roadmaps and quarterly planning docs help reinforce the direction, but I also invite feedback, so people feel invested, not just informed. When engineers understand why their work matters, they make better decisions and stay engaged. Communicating vision isn't a one-time presentation—it's an ongoing conversation that connects individual effort to team impact."

Q25: What Processes Are Important to a Successful Engineering Team? Tell Me About a Time You Introduced a New Process to the Team.

Interviewers ask this question to assess your understanding of effective engineering workflows and your ability to drive process improvement. They want to see if you can identify inefficiencies, implement solutions, and lead your team through change in a way that enhances productivity and collaboration. It also helps them evaluate your leadership style and how you balance structure with flexibility.

Sample Answer

"A successful engineering team needs clear communication, a lightweight but reliable process for planning and delivery, and consistent feedback loops. When I joined my last team, sprint retrospectives weren't producing meaningful improvements, and task prioritization often changed mid-sprint. I introduced a weekly roadmap checkpoint that included a 15-minute async update from leads across engineering, product, and design. This allowed us to adjust priorities more intentionally and reduced mid-sprint churn.

I also rolled out a lightweight RFC (Request for Comments) process for any work involving architectural changes. This improved collaboration and knowledge sharing without slowing delivery. Some engineers were skeptical at first, so I made sure to solicit feedback regularly and adjusted the template based on their input. Within two months, cross-team alignment improved significantly, and engineers said they felt more informed and empowered. These processes helped us move faster while keeping the team aligned and focused on outcomes, not just output."

Q26: When You're Interviewing an Engineer to Be on Your Team, What Do You Look for and How Do You Look for It. Provide Some Specific Questions You've Asked.

Hiring managers ask this to understand your leadership judgment, how well you can assess both technical and soft skills, and how you ensure alignment with team culture and business needs. They want to see if you have a structured approach to hiring and if you know how to ask the right questions to identify high-potential candidates. It also shows how committed you are to building high-performing, collaborative teams. Your response gives them a glimpse into how you balance technical evaluation with interpersonal fit.

Sample Answer

"When I'm interviewing an engineer, I look for strong problem-solving ability, clear communication, and a growth mindset. I start by understanding the candidate's approach to solving real-world engineering challenges. I usually ask, "Can you walk me through a time when you had to troubleshoot a production issue under pressure?" I'm listening for how they prioritize, communicate, and collaborate. I also ask, "Tell me about a time you had to learn a new technology quickly—how did you approach it?" This gives insight into adaptability and curiosity.

To assess technical depth, I include a practical design or architecture question tailored to our stack. I ask them to describe trade-offs they'd make and how they'd communicate those to non-engineers. Lastly, I try to understand how they handle feedback by asking, "Tell me about a piece of feedback that was hard to hear—how did you respond?" The goal is to find engineers who are not just skilled, but who elevate the team through their mindset, communication, and collaboration."