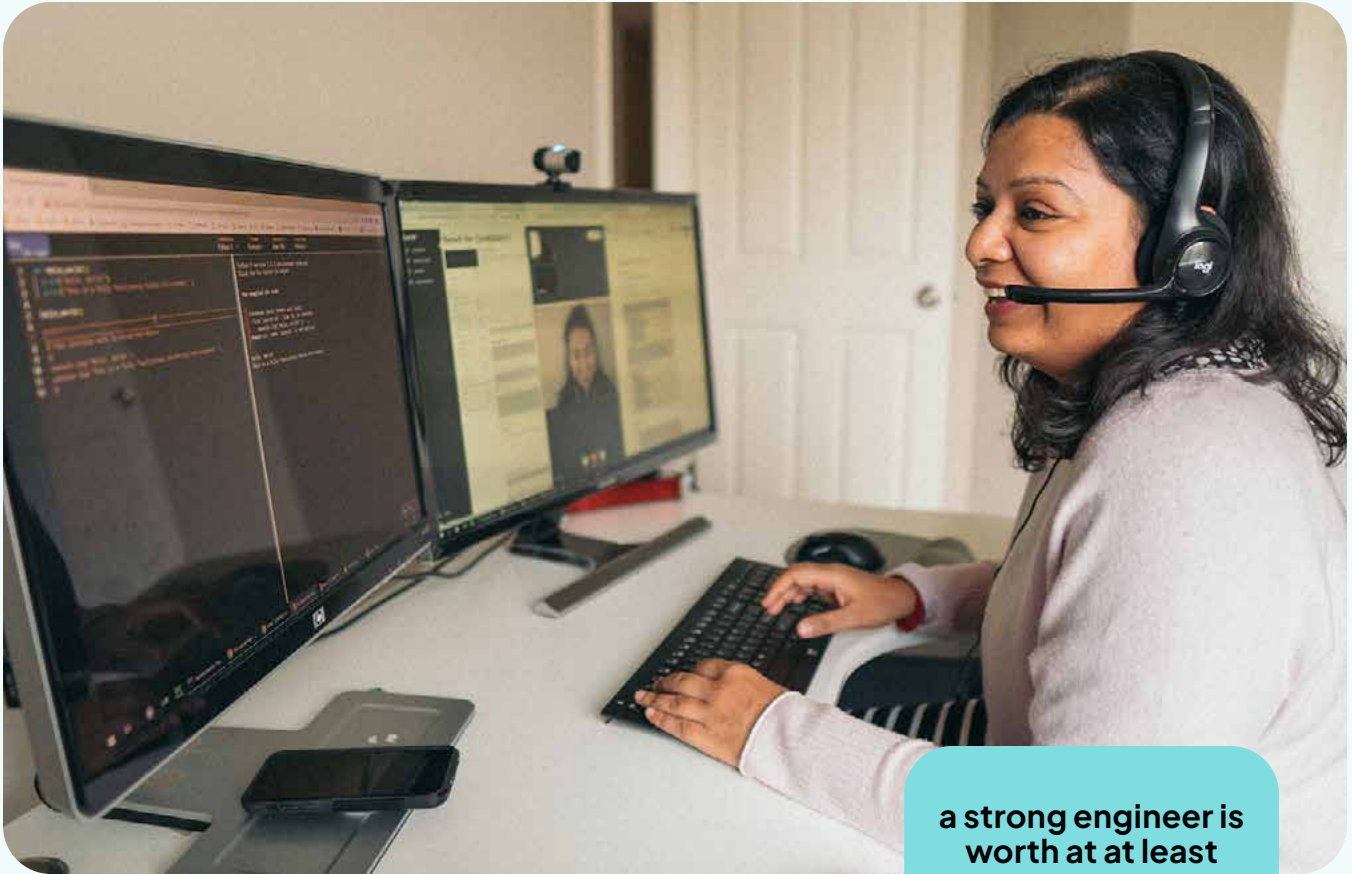


The Interviewer's Playbook:

Elevate your interviewing skills for the best candidate experience



Introduction



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The value of software engineers has never been higher. According to a recent [report on tech hiring trends](#) from The Harris Poll, a growing percentage of software leaders (55%, up from 45% in early 2020) say that a strong engineer is worth at least 3x their total comp.

While the labor market is showing more balance as economic conditions tighten, it remains crucial to ensure candidates have an incredible experience interviewing with your company.

Top talent will always have options, and ensuring that you make the best possible impression will help you hire the best talent possible. Ensuring that your interview process is fair, predictable, and enjoyable will position you as an employer of choice, and training interview panels and hiring committees to deliver this experience is integral to that outcome.



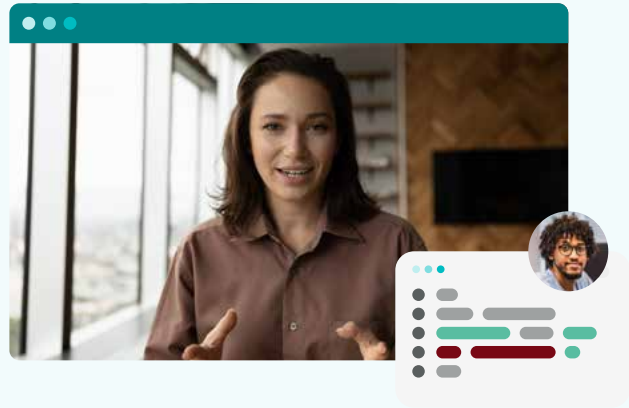
Why great interviews are important

Sourcing, screening, interviewing, and hiring high-quality talent is a skilled discipline with an incredible ripple effect on so many other parts of your business. Candidates will have interactions with many different people during the hiring process.

If the experience is consistently excellent, those candidates can **become ambassadors for your brand**, even if their journey doesn't result in a hire. They could be sources for future talent referrals — or a sales lead or new customer — depending on where their career takes them in the future.



Furthermore, **candidates begin experiencing your brand and your culture** long before they interview with anyone. They get an initial feel for what it would be like to work for your organization when they read your job description and apply.



Those perceptions are likely amplified and reinforced during interviews, which means candidates quickly gain a good understanding of what it takes to be successful at your company. If interviewers are gruff and difficult to interact with, candidates expect that behavior is tolerated, or even encouraged, to be successful on the job.

If interviewers are empathetic, warm, and accommodating, candidates will not only have the psychological safety to be their best possible selves during the interview. They will anticipate that your company's culture fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion. Candidates will be able to see themselves succeeding and delivering high-caliber work in an environment that fosters a high sense of belonging.

The interview experience also **influences productivity and performance management**. High performers want to work for organizations that already employ other high performers. These professionals know how to challenge and inspire each other to innovate to deliver work efficiently, effectively, and seamlessly.

They're also sensitive to bad experiences, and if they have one or perceive the environment isn't one where they can be empowered to do their best work, they'll decline your offer. Even worse, they may join your company but leave after a short period of time — leaving you to begin the search for a new candidate all over again.

How to get started

Interviewing is hard. It's nerve-wracking for everyone involved. Thinking about how to build an interview program from scratch can be overwhelming. Here are some practical tips for getting started:



Pick the Right Interviewers

Karat's global network of experienced, empathetic technical interviewers, known as [Interview Engineers](#), balance skill evaluations with human connections. They lead technical interviews daily for Fortune 100 and 500 companies hiring software developers and engineers. Drawing from what we hear from them when they join our community: They are **inspired to create exceptional candidate experiences** through the interviews they facilitate.

Here's how to jump-start your process: Whenever possible, partner with those kinds of people within your company — **committed professionals who are driven to pay it forward and help bring more incredible talent on board.**

Interviewing is a skill, and you should seek out interviewers who can commit to creating consistency for candidates and be receptive to feedback about how they show up for these interactions.



Pro Tip

This approach may mean that coworkers who deliver exceptional work may not be your best interviewers. In fact, they may not even be interested or available. Cast a really wide net to find out who is available to be a consistent part of your interview panels and interested in continuously improving their performance in this area.

Identify the Core Competencies

Once you have selected members for your interview panels, **get everyone together.** At a high level, discuss how the process will be structured. Talk about open roles they'll lead interviews for and the core competencies associated with those opportunities. Use those core competencies to **build a standard list of questions** that every interviewer will use during the process.

Adhering to this level of consistency creates a more predictable experience — an experience that's more equitable, consistent, transparent, and enjoyable — so candidates can perform to the best of their ability during the interview.

Incorporate Feedback

Delivering a fair and consistent experience for your candidates is **a long-term commitment to continuous improvement.**

This commitment means that you not only structure your interviews to be uniform and universal. It means that you maintain them, measure their effectiveness, and apply feedback to future enhancements to your interview process.

The interviewer checklist

At Karat, we've hand-selected a global network of Interview Engineers and have conducted hundreds of thousands of hours of technical interviews over the last decade, so we know a thing or two about what it takes to deliver an incredible interview experience for candidates.

We apply these steps to maintain and elevate our technical interviews for the best possible candidate experience. Here's your interviewer checklist:



Be as transparent as possible.

To help your candidates prepare to showcase the best of what they have to offer, set clear expectations as to what the interview will entail. This transparency will put candidates at ease and allow them to tap into their confidence.



Be unapologetically committed to consistency.

Ensure your interviewers know they must fiercely follow the framework, guide, and/or rubric. There's no way to give each and every candidate a fair shake if you don't ask the same questions and use the same evaluation criteria.



Offer second chances.

As the world's largest technical interviewer, we know interviews generate a lot of anxiety. All of the practice and preparation in the world can still result in suboptimal results. Technology can fail. Nerves can get the better of even the most qualified candidates. Because of that, we offer a "Redo" — a chance for candidates to retake an interview if they feel they didn't meet their own expectations.



Adopt a learner's mindset.

Interviewing is absolutely a skill that requires repetition, coaching, and feedback. Apply lessons learned from market conditions, industry best practices, candidate feedback, and interviewer guidance. It will ensure that you are using the best data to evolve and refine your process.



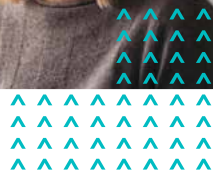
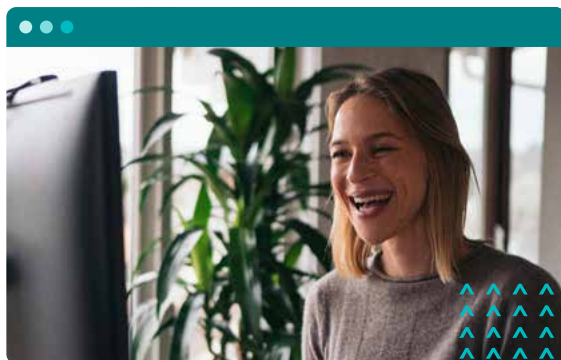
Use feedback as a gift.

In addition to receiving feedback from candidates, it's also important to share it with your team of interviewers. At Karat, we evaluate our evaluators. Our interviewers are constantly and consistently reviewed for both technical and soft skill proficiency. Our interviewers can fine-tune these skills through professional learning and development that we provide. They also receive feedback through our internal review program so they have a consistent bar or quality and deliver interviews that are fair, predictable, and enjoyable for candidates.



Foster a sense of support and community.

While we have honed interviewing as an art and a science, we know that most organizations can't prioritize it the way we can; however, many can capitalize on existing networks, programs, and teams to foster a sense of support and community. Consider bringing the colleagues who are a part of your core interviewing team together to share best practices, ask questions, and refine processes. If your company has internal programs or people dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion — as well as affinity or employee resource groups — I recommend including them in the discussion so you can benefit from their expertise.



Ensure a human-centered experience is at the heart of your process.

Everything we do at Karat advances our purpose to unlock opportunity, but that would be impossible if human connection wasn't paramount. Over the years, we've discovered that software engineers prefer live interviews over take-home exercises. We've infused the preference for human interaction into our entire process, because at the end of the day, interviews can't be fair, predictable, or enjoyable if they aren't meaningful. Those meaningful connections will be what your candidates remember most when they consider an offer to join your company. Optimizing your interview experience makes it so much easier to ensure they say "yes" when that time comes.

About Karat



Karat helps companies hire top engineering talent with confidence. As the end-to-end hiring solution, we work with organizations to improve the quality, efficiency, and equity of their technical hiring process. Global leaders like Walmart, Atlassian, Roblox, and Citi rely on Karat, combining human expertise with innovative technology, to conduct hundreds of assessments and interviews every day.

Our mission is to make every interview predictive, fair and enjoyable. Learn more about the world's largest interviewing company at www.karat.com.

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