Big Haystack Labs Interview Reminders

General advice:

1) Be patient. Some companies have more evolved recruiting processes than others.
    a) Especially in startups that lack internal recruiters, they may not have processes for things like making sure questions aren't asked twice. Remaining patient and polite will go along way with co-workers trying to imagine what it will be like sitting beside you when something more major like a site crash occurs.

2) Be humble. Never have we seen arrogance gain someone points in an interview, but many times we've seen this become the deciding factor in why an interview went poorly. This applies to every single person you meet in the interview, from the receptionist greeting you at the door, to the recruiting coordinator scheduling your day, to the most junior developer on the team.

3) Be informed about and enthusiastic about the company, it's product, it's mission. Read the website end to end. Look up information on the founders, on the most recent found of funding, on any accolades, etc.
    a) If you have the names of interviewers you will be speaking with or meeting, look them up on LinkedIn. Do you have any connections in common, or hobbies in common? These topics may be good icebreakers. This investment of an evening will go very far.
        i) Get their emails for a follow up thank you message for their time & opportunity
4) Let the interviewer guide the interview. Most interviewers will follow the "70/30" rule, wanting you to do 70 percent of the talking because they want to learn about you.
    a) That said, make sure you are always staying on topic, are not rambling, and are offering pauses so that an interviewer can cut in and ask another question, or move along, if need be.
    b) Whenever in doubt, check in with the interviewer to see if they're satisfied that the answer is complete, and when going into a long, technical discussion, come up for air from time to time to make sure you haven't lost the interviewer with any of the details.

Answering General Questions:

1. Answer questions in a way that suggest you intend to stay in the company for a reasonable time.
   a. For instance, if they ask about career goals, don't say "Work in a big company" if they are a small company.

2. Ask questions! Asking questions about the company and the role are indications that you are serious about this opportunity.
   a. On the flip side, a lack of questions often signals disinterest, and we've seen candidates passed up for this reason. The best questions are questions that are not easily answered by visiting the company website.

3. Can't think of any questions? You can't go wrong by asking each interviewer about their own experiences at the company.
   a. Examples include:
      i. What is their role?
      ii. How would you be working together if you joined?
      iii. What are they most excited about on the company's horizon?
      iv. What have been some of the biggest challenges in the workplace?
      v. What competitors worry them?
      vi. What advice would they have for a new employee joining?

4. Answer behavioral questions in a professional, but self aware manner.
   a. For instance, don't say that your biggest weakness is being a perfectionist. We all have areas on which we are working.
   b. Acknowledge your shortcomings, but point out ways you are working on these and have improved.

Technical Questions:

1. Pause before answering technical questions.
2. Make sure you fully understand the question, the various approaches one could take, and the tradeoffs of each approach.
3. See if they require the code to be in a certain language, or are open on language, or would even accept pseudo code.
4. Ask clarifying questions regarding which tradeoffs are most important.
5. If they are unable to provide guidance, call out the assumptions and tradeoffs you are making in your approach.

1. Listen very carefully for advice. Companies want to see you do well in the interview - they want to fill their position.
   a. As such, if you are going astray, they will often try to guide you back on track. If they say, "That works, but what's the complexity?" they probably don't want you to just tell move along to the next question - they want to collaborate. They may be trying to hint that there is a more efficient solution, and that they care about efficiency.
2. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."
   a. If you pretend to know something you don't, you will likely be discovered.

   However, if you take a curiosity-based approached of, "Hmm, I've never done this before, but let me roll up my sleeves and see how this works out," you'll make a better impression on the company.

Email Big HaystackLabs for any questions or more advice / tidbits of knowledge