

ThinkNimble Engineer Interview Rubric

Candidate Name: First Last

Interviewing for: Client

Date of Interview: Jan 18, 2021

Format of Interview: Videoconference

Interviewer(s): William Huster

Summary

I think [Name] would make an excellent addition to any development team as a frontend Individual Contributor (IC). I think she would meet or exceed Client's expectations for high quality user experience. I would recommend her as a "Lead Frontend Engineer," because although her frontend skills are strong, I do not think that she would be the best choice for a technical leader that can drive architectural decisions and serve as the "anchor" for Client's growing development team. As an IC, I believe she would excel.

Technically, her greatest strength is in frontend development with React, particularly mobile-focused web and application development. She has very broad experience with various frontend technologies and best practices. I was particularly impressed with her experience with front-end testing technologies, A/B testing, and Behavior-Driven Design (BDD). She *can* work full-stack and has some experience with backend frameworks, databases, etc, but my sense is that Client would not be able to rely on her as a solo full-stack developer for an extended period of time. Instead, I would pair her with a strong software architect or back-end developer who enjoys working with data.

[Name] is very product-oriented, and I can tell that she thinks in terms of user workflows first and foremost. I believe she would add a lot of value to a product design brainstorm with a designer or product manager and that she is capable of delivering top-quality user interface work on her own. She is a decent communicator and appears very capable of communicating about technical matters with non-technical stakeholders.

[Name] seems exceptionally kind, humble, and empathetic. So I also believe her presence would help "glue" a dev team together. That is, I think she would work well with various personality types. She would get to know her teammates, make herself available to help others, surface conflicts and problems across the team, and be proactive in suggesting solutions.

[Name] has worked at some start-ups and understands what it takes, but she also wants to make sure that she will be able to maintain work-life balance at Company. Right now she is leaving a position where she felt the leadership expected too many hours, weekend work, and did not respect her personal time boundaries, so she would like to set expectations about that up front.

I would highly recommend [Name] as a “Good Candidate” for a lead frontend engineering position.

Base Requirements

Get to know the candidate and make a broad assessment of their skills, attitude, and comfort level with different technology. We're looking for anyone who is a promising fit for the job role.

Criteria	Rating (1-5)	Notes
Personal timeline matches our hiring timeline. Can relocate to New York, etc.	5	[Name] is looking to move on from her present position immediately. Already based in New York City.
Demonstrates strong written and verbal communication skills. Is well-spoken and a clear thinker.	4	[Name] seemed like a good communicator overall.
Has relevant past work experience	5	Prior experience in e-commerce. A wealth of experience in front end development would make her a great asset in developing interfaces with strong user experience qualities.
Demonstrates passion for the work they'll be doing.	5	[Name] is definitely passionate about frontend development and user experience.
Is prepared for the challenges of working in a startup. Is not intimidated by these challenges and acknowledges that this will be more demanding than other jobs at a similar pay grade.	4	I believe [Name] knows what is expected from a start-up environment. She did communicate reluctance to work long hours and would like to maintain work-life balance.
Has an understanding of what Client does (not applying completely cold).	4	Yes, but no specific expertise in Client's industry.

Notes

Job Requirements

Position: Full-Stack Engineer

Criteria	Rating (1-5)	Notes
Have you worked full-stack in a live production system?	4	Yes, [Name] has worked full-stack both in work projects and personal side projects. She has worked on production

		projects servicing millions of customers and so understands how to respond to production issues. She emphasized that infrastructure management and data-heavy backend development is not really in her wheelhouse.
Have you worked on a distributed system? In what capacity?	3	Has worked in a distributed system, but has not designed, built, and managed one on her own.
What is Engineering's role in product design? (Enjoys being a part of product design. Has done it before and is constructively critical of the process.)	5	[Name] enjoys being a part of the product design process and creating strong user experiences.
What do you do to develop yourself personally and professionally?	4	[Name] stays current on technologies, which is very necessary to front-end development, which has changed tremendously over the past ten years.

Notes

Tech Familiarity

Ask candidate how they would rate themselves 1-10 on the following.

Criteria	Yes/No	Rating (1-5)	Notes
Python	Yes	3	Some familiarity, but not an extensive amount of experience.
Django or similar	Yes	3	Some familiarity, but not an extensive amount of experience.
JavaScript	Yes	5	Very experienced - main focus
Vue.js or similar	Yes	5	Very experienced - main focus
React/React Native (Expo?)	Yes	5	Very experienced - main focus
HTML, CSS, LESS	Yes	5	Very experienced - main focus
Build systems (Grunt, Gulp, etc.)	Yes	4	
Configuration systems (vagrant, docker, etc)	Yes	3	Has used systems like docker, but mainly to support front end dev
SQL (MySQL, PostgreSQL)	Yes	3	Understands the fundamentals, but

			has not done anything particularly data-oriented.
Analytics Engines & Search (Elasticsearch, etc.)	Yes	2	
Webservers (Apache, Nginx)	Yes	2	

Notes

Technical Questions

We'll ask questions that focus on programming paradigms, rather than programming trivia.

Question	Rating, 1-5	Notes
What is a "data type"? [Name] some or all of the data types in your favorite programming language. How do they differ, and how do you use them?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
What is a "data structure"? [Name] some or all of the data structures in your favorite programming language. How do they differ, and how do you use them?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
What's the relationship between a data type or data structure and an algorithm?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
Many modern web programming languages are "loosely typed". What does this mean, and what impact does this have on how you use data types and data structures in modern web programming?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
What does "truthy" and "falsy" mean in loosely-typed languages like Python and JavaScript?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
What does it mean to say a variable is "scoped"? How are variables scoped in you preferred programming language?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
What is Object-Oriented programming? Can you give an example of when you have used it in your own programming experience?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
What is the difference between an object instance and a class? Can you provide examples?	5	Has solid fundamentals and a lot of experience.
Pros and cons of monolithic vs. microservice infrastructures.	3	Not as strong when it comes to designing data models and architectures.

What is asynchronous programming and why is it important in JavaScript?	5	
[Name] some design patterns. Can you provide examples of when you've used one or two of them in your own work? Briefly discuss the pros, cons, and trade-offs of different design patterns.	4	
How do you approach software architecture?	3	[Name] is less comfortable when it comes to large application architecture and backend work.
How would you plan and communicate the trade-offs on a major software architecture decision?	3	Did not get a great response to this one.
How do you help scope work and plan long-term road maps.	3	Did not get a great response to this one.

Bonus Criteria

Criteria	Rating, 1-5	Notes
Has built and shipped a full-stack system from scratch.	5	
Has designed and built a distributed, highly available system.	2	
Has start-up experience or started their own thing.	4	Came into two start-ups at an early stage. Has worked on small engineering teams as a leadership and hiring manager. Experienced an exit to Company.
Experience building real time and/or mobile apps.	5	Extensive experience building for mobile

Notes

How do you approach architecture?

Hiring and building a team?

Most impressive engineering project/success? Your role in it?

Not strong in architecture and back end stuff

Has mentored people

- Never had a problem attracting talent
- Handing off decisions to them
- My management style: Try to be available to people all the time
- Weekly one-on-ones
- In a smaller set-up, retros aren't as interesting as 1-on-1s
 - Try to take things to a more personal level
- People are comfortable being open and honest with me

Leadership

Good at communicating with non-engineering stakeholders

Very product-oriented - thinks in terms of user flows

Empathetic

Would be a very good team player

Good "glue" for the dev team

I don't see things as negative - be glad about what's already there and respect what it took to build

Is sensitive to being interrupted during the work day and having to switch contexts frequently. Wanted to see the backlog and understand whether Client had a good idea of where they want to go.