Questions to ask companies

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Notes:
- *It's a good idea to ask some subset of your interviewers the same questions to see how their answers differ… because the devil is in the deltas.*
- *Don't waste precious time talking about benefits/salary/vacations/process during interviews – you can get those answers later from people who aren't domain experts.*
- ***Bolded questions** are ones I particularly enjoy or find non-obvious.*

Team caliber/culture
- How long have you been here?
- **When you were last interviewing, what were some of your other options, and what made you choose this company?**
- What is the most fulfilling/exciting/technically complex project that you've worked on here so far?
- What is something you wish were different about your job?
- **How often have you moved teams? What made you join the team you're on right now? If you wanted to move teams, what would need to happen?**
- (If the company is a startup) When's the last time you interacted with a founder? What was it regarding? Generally how involved are the founders in the day-to-day?

Engineering
- What does a typical day look like?
- What is your stack?
- What is the rationale for/story behind this specific stack?
- How often do you add new tools to the mix?
- Do you tend to roll your own solutions more often or rely on third party tools? What's the rationale in a specific case?
- What kind of test coverage do you have?
- Would you describe your engineering culture as more pragmatic or more theoretical?
- What portion of your time is spent working on new stuff rather than iterating on existing stuff?
- How long are your release cycles?

- What's been the worst technical fuckup that's happened in the recent past? How did you guys deal with it? What changes were implemented afterwards to make sure it didn't happen again?
- **What is the most costly technical decision made early on that the company is living with now?**

Product voice/visibility into business side
- **What are you working on right now? Why/how did that become the thing that you ended up working on?**
- If you had an idea for something new to build, what would you have to do to make it happen?
- **What is some of the more meaty new stuff that got pushed in the last release? Where did the idea for that feature originate? Where do product ideas generally come from?**
- **Who are the other major players in this space? What do we have that they don't?**
  - *The answer to these questions can be useful for getting some idea of what the space looks like and what traction the company in question might have. Most importantly, though, it'll give you some insight into whether the people at the company care about the product and the business side of things or not and how much they've thought about stuff like this.*

Attrition
- How long does the average engineer stay at the company?
- **Why have the last few people left?**

Entrepreneurship
- **How many former employees have gone on to found startups?**
- Was their leaving to do so was generally looked on favorably?
- How does company culture encourage entrepreneurship? Specific examples?