The interview process

You previously learned how to create a resume and cover letter to apply for security jobs. In this reading, you'll concentrate on how to prepare for the interview process. Although the interview process can vary widely from one company to another, most companies follow the steps described in this reading.

Getting contacted by a recruiter

After you apply for a job, you might receive a call, an email, or a message from a recruiter expressing interest in your application and asking to schedule a call or meeting. Reply as soon as possible to show that you're responsive and interested in the position.

Preliminary interview or phone screening

In most cases, the first step in the interview process is a preliminary interview, sometimes referred to as a phone screening. This usually involves a conversation with a recruiter over the phone, in person, or on a video call.

The preliminary interview is typically shorter than a regular interview. The recruiter will share information about the company and the job opening. Then they'll ask you questions to get to know you and your work experience better. The recruiter will also provide time for you to ask questions about the role and the company, so be sure to prepare a few questions before the interview. For example, you might ask: "What is the work culture like at the company?" or "What will my average day be like in this role?" Asking questions helps demonstrate your interest and will help you determine whether the job will be a good fit for you.

After the interview, send a thank-you email to the recruiter within 24 hours. Express your gratitude for their time and briefly restate why you would be a good fit for the position.

Additional interviews

Once you've passed the preliminary interview, you might be invited for multiple additional interviews. These interviews are typically with the hiring manager. You might also meet with other individuals on the team and be required to go through a technical interview. You'll learn more about technical interviews in a later reading.

This interview is often longer than the preliminary interview. It could be in person, over the phone, or on a video call.

The interview usually opens with introductions and a brief description of the company and job position. Then, the interviewer will ask you questions about your background, skills, and experience. Next, you'll have an opportunity to ask questions about the company, the role, and job expectations.

Finally, you'll learn about next steps in the hiring process.

There might be multiple rounds of interviews, depending on how the company's interview process works. These additional interviews could be longer, include future teammates or other employees at the company, and feature questions that take more time and thought to answer.

As with the preliminary interview, send a thank-you note to the people you interviewed with after each round of interviews.

Final offer

Now comes the exciting part: Receiving a job offer. The company might reach out to you by phone or email. After the company extends their initial offer, you'll need to decide whether or not to accept it or negotiate for a higher salary or other benefits. Feel free to ask for a day or two to make your decision.

Building perseverance

If the company lets you know that you didn't get the job, take a moment to process your emotions. If you'd like, you can let the company know that you appreciate the opportunity to be considered and that you'd be interested in any future roles that might be a good fit. You can also ask for feedback on what you could do better next time.

Key takeaways

Interviews are a great opportunity to learn more about a job and the company you'd be working for. By preparing for the interview process and continuing to persevere in your job search, you'll be well on your way to building a career in cybersecurity.

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