



A Guide to Help You Prepare for Your Engineering Manager Interview at Flipkart

Engineering Managers (EMs) lead teams of diverse groups of people which are moving towards realising Flipkart's vision. They are responsible for building high-performing teams where each team member feels the impact of their work. EMs also set direction for the team and support people in their career growth. They ensure that the teams have an inspiring vision for the future. The teams work on a spectrum of products and platforms which power Flipkart. EMs provide technical leadership to identify and define the right component/system abstractions/capabilities for current/future product/platform asks. One of the key responsibilities of an EM is to understand business goals and contribute to product strategy and take accountability for moving key business metrics. They are also responsible for driving execution using agile methodologies by removing impediments along the way with the big picture in mind.

Interview Process

Phase 1: Pre-onsite Interview

- Exploratory Discussion
- Technical Phone Screening

Phase 2: Onsite Interview

- Problem Solving
- Architecture
- Ownership and Past experience
- People Management
- Product Sense
- Team Fitment
- Culture Fitment

PHASE 1: Exploratory and Phone Screening Rounds

ROUND 1.1: EXPLORATORY DISCUSSION (30 MINUTES)

This is the stage when you'll be interacting with your potential Hiring Manager. As soon as your CV is shortlisted, your recruiter will set up an exploratory discussion based on your availability. The intent of this round is to understand your past experience, expectations and aspirations for the future.

This round is typically conducted over phone/Hangouts. Please ensure that you're comfortably settled in a quiet space for a fruitful discussion. You will be expected to introduce yourself, your past work experience, strengths and aspirations in this round - be concise, clear and prepared.

Take this opportunity to ask as many questions as you want in order to get a holistic picture of the role. Make sure that you clearly understand the charter, scope, kind of work involved in the role offered by us. Have a constructive and open discussion on your eligibility, aspirations and other concerns that you possibly have.

Note: Exploratory discussion with the Hiring Manager depends on a case-to-case basis. Your recruiter will walk you through the detailed hiring process.

ROUND 1.2: TECHNICAL PHONE SCREENING (60 MINUTES)

Before you come for an onsite interview, you'll have a discussion with one of your potential peers. This is a technical screening round which is primarily focused on past work experience, role-eligibility and a few problem-solving questions relevant to the role you're being interviewed for.

This is a telephonic/Hangout discussion. You can expect questions about your past experience, major projects that you've worked on depending on the role you're being evaluated for. The interviewer may deep dive into one of your projects that you have executed in the past to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

Please ensure that you are available for the call in a quiet place. Be well-versed with everything mentioned in your resume. Have a brief introduction of your experience ready. Go in-depth if interviewers ask you details about anything specific.

PHASE 2: Onsite Interview

ROUND 2.1: PROBLEM SOLVING

The interviewer will discuss a real life fuzzy problem with you. You can expect to be asked a problem, for instance, design a bookmyshow.com booking system, content for Google Street View, etc. You should be able to define the problem, and finally come up with a solution that's minimalistic and achievable. The interviewer may test you on your ability to come up with multiple solutions, and if you can handle further complexity in the problem statement.

You will be assessed on:

- Requirements gathering (Clarify requirements and corner cases, Detailed but time boxed and Not over-engineered for edge cases)
- Ability to arrive at component view (separation of concerns) and define interfaces.
- Derive and unblock immediate milestones. Define an approach to reach the larger milestone iteratively.

How to prepare for the round:

- Pick real-world problems and take a stab at them
- Clarify the problem statement and do not assume solutions
- Ask enough questions to identify corner cases
- Be prepared to address further complexities initially introduced in the problem statement
- Go structurally. Fix requirements and scenarios before you proceed to the solution. Identify components and interfaces, look for any unnecessary coupling, and validate the data flow
- Do not get biased by tech choices in your solutioning

ROUND 2.2: ARCHITECTURE (60 MINUTES)

The interviewer may ask you a broad functional problem like a Catalog Service, Search Ranking, etc. Apart from addressing concerns around scale, you're expected to cover aspects of availability, reliability, and recoverability. You would be expected to make and justify your tech choices for solving each of these. The interviewer can ask you questions which might not be e-commerce specific.

Try to ensure that your approach and solution by tech choices are not biased. Make sure that they are not influenced by the tech choices that you have made in the past. Analyze if you need to solve each of these, or in case the product doesn't necessarily warrant any of these aspects. For instance, higher recovery time might be acceptable for some systems.

In order to prepare yourself for this round, you can pick problems from diverse domains like E-commerce, Healthcare, Finance and PRACTICE. Try to identify and understand different non-functional aspects that affect a certain problem and how solving for them influences your tech choices.

ROUND 2.3: OWNERSHIP AND PAST EXPERIENCE (60 MINUTES)

The interviewer will discuss some of your previous projects and understand your contributions to planning, prioritisation, milestone formulation, stakeholder communication and execution practices. They might tinker with the premise or introduce hypothetical scenarios and assess how you react to dynamic situations. For instance, are you able to influence people over whom you don't necessarily have authority, or how do you maintain quality in tight timeline scenarios.

This round is similar to the technical phone screen round. In addition to the preparation you have done for technical phone screen rounds, you can also try brushing up your knowledge on agile methodology.

ROUND 2.4: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT (60 MINUTES)

The interviewer will focus on your people management experience from the pivots of conflict handling, team composition, team development, ability to have career growth discussions with your team, ability to keep the team engaged, etc. You can expect questions around conflict management, ideal team structure and organization pyramid based on current milestone(s) and future roadmap, coaching and mentoring style, etc.

It would be best to prepare yourself for this round in advance. Introspect and keep your answers ready before the interview. Reflect on your past experiences and articulate yourself well during the test. There is no right or wrong answer for this round.

ROUND 2.5: PRODUCT SENSE (60 MINUTES)

In this round, you will be assessed on your product sense. The interviewer will work with you on solving problems together and arriving at an aligned understanding of the customer and/or the business use-case. They'll discuss how to break down a larger problem into smaller milestones and work on prioritising them. They'll try to understand your approach of balancing short-term objectives and long-term product building. They'll work with you on defining the critical business metrics.

Do not mistake this round as an assessment for a Product Management role. It is best to focus on how you would translate product abstractions into engineering constructs of design (HLD & LLD) as well as physical components, and give them a view of how their goals could be achieved in a measurable manner. You'll also need to provide them an execution view of intermediate but measurable milestones.

ROUND 2.5: TEAM FITMENT (60 MINUTES)

The intent of this round is to evaluate your team fitment based on your experience, interests and strengths demonstrated across other rounds. In this round, you'll be interacting with your potential team leader/hiring manager who will try to get to know you better in order to make an informed choice that we hire the right person for the right job.

The interviewer will try to understand your aspirations, inspirations and motivations, self-awareness, leadership ability, stakeholder management, strengths and weaknesses, etc.

You can also expect questions around some of the competencies which you would have been evaluated for in previous rounds. Think of this round as a summary of all the discussions that you have had during the day.

ROUND 2.6: CULTURE FITMENT ROUND (60 MINUTES)

We are a proud community of Flipsters. All our decisions are deeply rooted in our values, and they have made us into what we are today - successful and confident. Our core values define our identity and form the basis of our actions and reflect in everything that we do at Flipkart. These values enable us to shape the desired organization culture in which each Flipster can thrive and be at their best.

In this round, you are being evaluated for your cultural fitment at Flipkart. The round is meant to assess whether you would be a good fit in the world of Flipsters or not. There are no right or wrong answers. Be honest and think thoroughly before you answer. There may be questions around your past experiences, career aspirations, hypothetical scenarios, your strengths and weaknesses, etc. We highly recommend that you invest some time in preparing yourself for the interview.

- Read up about our values and what makes you a great fit for us
- Be honest about your success and failures
- Invest some time in preparing yourself for the interview
- Be candid and help us understand you better

QUICK TIPS!

NERVOUS? DON'T BE.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR A SMOOTH INTERVIEW:

Be prepared:

Needless to say, we want to hire the best talent. Prepare well, understand what we do as a business, the position you are interviewing for, learn how your role will contribute in achieving our vision and brush up your basics as much as possible. At Flipkart, we strongly believe that our highest leveraged time should be applied to hiring and helping onboard the absolute best talent that we can scout around the world.

Pique our interest:

Tell us something about yourself that prompts us to know more about you. Flipkart is a great mix of people with various talents and skill sets and so, we'd like to know how and why you stand out from the rest.

Think things through:

We don't necessarily look for absolute solutions. Instead, we'd like to know how you approach a problem. Therefore, make sure you think through your answers. It's okay if you need a few minutes to collate your thoughts. You can help the interviewers understand your thought process by thinking out loud.

Be authentic and candid:

Nobody is perfect. It's okay to openly admit past failures - if any. At Flipkart, we place intent and commitment over success. And, being honest about yourself will help us identify those traits in you.

Show your passion:

It's not an interrogation, it's a discussion. Blend in a lot of passion and energy in your interactions. Ours is a fast-paced and challenging workplace and therefore, there's no room for someone who takes it slow.

Ask questions:

We are open to all kinds of questions. It's the easiest way to get to know each other better. So, ask away!

Understand how we work:

Get yourself acquainted with our values: Audacity, Bias for Action, Customer First and Integrity. Our values are deeply rooted in all our major decisions at Flipkart.

Audacity:

We challenge established standards and keep pushing the boundaries. We innovate continuously and find disruptive solutions. We are fearless in trying anything new.

Bias for Action:

We strongly believe in taking initiative and driving results with impact. We make speedy decisions and believe in failing fast.

Customer First:

We continuously strive to understand our customers' needs. We validate our success through customer actions. We go deep into customer issues and resolve the root cause.

Integrity:

We strive to do the right thing, in the right way, at all times. We do not compromise on our values

If you are someone who believes in these values, and you're able to exhibit these values, you are a great fit for us. Reflect on your past experiences and prepare yourself well before the interview. Spend some time on identifying instances from the past when you exhibited these values.