

The 4-round loop, on one page

A screen, a practical round, a depth round and a hiring manager conversation, run in 1 day, with every scorecard in before anyone speaks. A fifth round adds noise, not signal.

ROUND	LENGTH	WHO	WHAT IT MEASURES	WHAT IT MUST PRODUCE
1. Screen	30 min	Recruiter or hiring manager	Experience, motivation, level. Does this person want this job or any job.	A level hypothesis and the 2 things to test hardest.
2. Practical coding	60 min	1 engineer	A problem from your own codebase, stripped down. AI, docs and any tool they use at work are allowed; you are hiring the person who works that way on Monday.	Working code, one test, and answers to "why this" under 3 follow-ups.
3. Depth or design	60 min	1 or 2 engineers	One design problem with clear constraints, scored against criteria written in advance.	Requirements clarified first, scale estimated with numbers, one unprompted trade-off.
4. Hiring manager and team	45 min	Hiring manager	How they work with people, handle disagreement, what they need from a manager.	Evidence on the ownership and communication lines of the scorecard.

The 3 rules

- 1. 4 rounds, not 9.** Rounds 5 to 9 re-measure what rounds 1 to 4 told you, with tired people doing the measuring. Delete any round that produces no evidence against the scorecard.
- 2. 1 day, panel meets the same afternoon.** On site or remote, with breaks. A loop spread over 3 weeks loses candidates to companies that decided faster, and nobody re-reads notes from 12 days ago. The work of an 80,000 euro engineer is worth at least 300 euro a working day.
- 3. Scorecards in before anyone speaks.** Score and evidence submitted in writing, including by the most senior person. The debrief then examines disagreement instead of averaging it away. This rule is free and has the highest return.

The day, as a schedule

TIME	BLOCK	NOTE
09:30	Screen, 30 min	Can run earlier in the week if the candidate prefers; everything else stays on one day.
10:15	Practical coding, 60 min	Environment tested the day before. The candidate is told in the invitation that tools are allowed.

TIME	BLOCK	NOTE
11:30	Depth or design, 60 min	Same problem for every candidate at this level.
12:30	Break	Lunch, or the end of the remote block. Interviewers write their scorecards now, not at 16:00.
13:30	Hiring manager, 45 min	Candidate's questions get the last 15 minutes.
15:00	Scorecards locked	Nobody sees another's until their own is in.
15:30	Debrief, 30 min	Ratings up at once, lowest speaks first, hiring manager decides in writing.
Next day	Answer	Offer, or a rejection built from the scorecard lines.

The one number to measure first

Days from first contact to offer. Today: _____ Target after the change:

Every change on this page moves it, and it is the one candidates feel. Measure it before you change anything, then again after 5 loops.

What most teams get wrong

They change the process without changing the interviewers. 40% of hiring managers never had formal interview training (Robert Walters). A shorter loop with an uncalibrated panel is a faster way to the same coin flip. Pick one change first: the scorecard rule costs nothing and applies to the next debrief. Then the length of the loop. Then the panel.

SmartHiring by Elman Huseynov · the post behind this file: smarthiring.tech/engineering-hiring-process/ · Use it inside your company as you like; please link the post rather than re-hosting the file.