# Twitter Thread by Kenneth Cassel ■



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## Software engineering interview experiences don't have to be terrible.

## Thread on my best software engineering interview experience.
## ■■ (Thanks @PaulYacoubian for the idea)

Starting from the top of the funnel, I heard of this company (fintech startup, close to $1b valuation, based in NYC) from a podcast they were advertising on, and I liked the mission.

I went to their website and applied.

Their application portal used greenhouse. One page and no need for re-typing resume info.

They had an open field that said "Tell me something we should know about you".

I wrote about how I was a career switcher, had kids, went to school while working full time, etc.

Here's where they started to stand out.

They emailed me back a few days later and sent me a calendly link to schedule my first interview.

Letting the candidate choose a time for an interview is a small detail but is great for reducing candidate stress.

I scheduled my first interview. I received an email detailing what the interview would be about, what to expect, and what to prepare for. It would be a casual chat.

My interviewer mentioned and asked tons of questions about the free-response field I had filled out earlier.

After, He immediately told me the next steps and gave an outline for the whole process.

1- Pair programming with one engineer. Pass/Fail to next round
2- Pair programming session with 3 engineers in one day. Pass/Fail to next round
3- Talks with executive folks
4 - Offer

The first pair programming session was an open-ended system design type interview. (I interviewed for two different roles 2 years apart at this company. They later switched to using @byteboardDev for this portion, which I really enjoyed.)

They let me use my own laptop for all pair programming. I could use google, ask questions from the interviewer, and overall it felt more closely related to a pair programming session at work than an interview.

All the people I paired with were friendly and low-ego.

Something that stood out to me:
I spoke with ~10 people each time I interviewed, and I could tell that each of them had read my application closely.

They showed a general interest in me!

Contrast this to other interviews I've had where they seemed almost bothered I was there

At the end of each step, I was informed clearly what and when I should expect to hear from them next.

I never felt in the dark.

They biased towards responding quickly. The whole interview felt well thought out.

The pair programming itself was a problem related to finance. Add X feature to this full-stack application in rails.

The interview closely approximated what a day in the life of working at the company would be like. No algorithm questions.

It was a fun exercise and I didn't feel drained for once during the interview process.

The talks with the executives went great too. They were transparent about the needs, what they were looking for, growth trajectory, etc.

Here's where it gets even better.

I accepted an offer but later had to rescind it.

I rescinded because we found out we were having a baby.

The offer was for an internship in NYC. I live in Texas. Couldn't miss his birth.

I felt bad but they were very understanding. The recruiter also recently found out they were having a child and he sounded excited for us!

I thought that was the end of it but around a year later the recruiter reached back out to me and asked how the baby was doing.

We chatted back and forth for a few weeks over email on babies, software development, etc.

It felt very human and it made a huge impression on me.

A few years later in my career, I started looking for a new full-time role. The first company that popped up in my head was this one.

I emailed the recruiter and he started the process over for me again. It was mostly the same but just as pleasant.

I didn't ever end up working at this company but I've told countless friends and colleagues about the interview process and how great it was.

If you put the candidate experience first, your interview process can be another form of PR/Marketing for your hiring funnel

Lots of companies get this wrong, so if you can do things to stand out, your candidates will tell engineers and lower your overall hiring cost.

Have empathy for the people you are interviewing.