Microsoft

Question

Software Development Engineer In Test (SDET) Interview

how would you move mount fuji?

Answer
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Interview Answer

24 Answers

do not expect to hear this type of question. Brush off your data structures and algorithms skills and you will be ok.

Interview Candidate on Sep 4, 2009

These questions don't have a right answer, so don't stress about them. They present a problem that is overwhelming, so that the interviewers can see how you work through problems.

Dusty on Jan 13, 2010

I would first answer with, "First, I would analyze the problem and determine if it didn't make better sense to come to the mountain rather than move the mountain. Assuming that's not feasible..."

I think that's a key element they're looking for in an answer. That you can look at a major task and first identify if there isn't a better approach. The next element is to determine how you would go about completing a seemingly impossible or gargantuan task. The specifics of this part of the answer don't matter other than to show that you have an understanding that huge problems need to be broken down into smaller, more manageable tasks using the resources you have.

Tim on Jan 13, 2010

When they ask a question like this at MS, they do want an answer. If you tell them that you want to consider alternatives up front, they will wave that off and tell you that, in this hypothetical situation, alternatives were already considered and that moving the mountain is the approach was chosen. They really want you to answer the question.

The point of this question is - process. They want to see what process you use to solve problems. It is important to show that you solve the problem not by arranging and re-arranging a series of random thoughts but that you can approach it methodically and that this methodology can be applied to any problem.

Do not to sum up with a clever answer that attempts to solve the problem - they will just keep insisting that you tackle the problem. If you don't, you won't pass the interview.

So, brush up on your problem solving process before you interview at MS. Use these questions as an opportunity to impress them with how well you can solve difficult problems.

Mike on Jan 18, 2010

Well, I first would ask "How long do you need to move it?", "do you have an exact location for it?", these questions are relevant to the solution. After that I would start by calculating the total mass of mount Fuji and having the desired final location will determine the method used to move it. If it were just a few inches or meters, I think the best approach would be to cut the mount by its base and make a huge crane to lift it, but if you need to move it a longer distance then maybe some kind of orbiting crane will be needed to get over other mountains, oceans, etc and still you need to cut through its base. Anyway the question is hilarious, maybe they are testing your sense of humour.

Pablo on Jan 18, 2010

I'd hire one of those coal mining companies from West Virginia, like Patriot. They've got experience and could do it quickly & cheaply because they don't care what they destroy in the process. Do I pass or did you just write me off as a wise-ass?

Jeff in Boston on Jan 18, 2010

Assumption: It does not need to be in the same condition when I'm done.
Assumption: I have unlimited funds, but am limited to existing machinery, and cost efficiency is valued.
Assumption: I have unlimited time, but sooner is better.
Assumption: The destination is within Japan.
Assumption: It is entirely inert, so I will not deal with any magma.

Mine a road from the base, circling up the mountain, to the top. Use modern mining equipment and dump trucks to remove successive layers of mountain. Dump at the new location. Repeat as necessary.

KC on Jan 18, 2010

Assumption - the mountain moving project has not been widely publicized.
Assumption - the mountain does not need to be moved for human safety or health reasons.
Assumption - the mountain must be moved, but specific destination is unimportant.

I would create a massive disinformation campaign over a period of several years. My team would stealthily modify existing historical records, fabricate "newly discovered" relics, and otherwise build evidence towards a theory that the existing known "Mt. Fuji of Historical Fact" is, instead, another lesser known, but nearby mountain.

After solidly tying the evidence together, I would set a group of international (but primarily Japanese) graduate students on a seemingly-unrelated task, and allow them to "accidentally" discover the true location of what will henceforth be known as Mt. Fuji.

Deano on Jan 19, 2010

consider that perhaps we spent too much time determining IF we could move Mount Fuji and not enough time considering SHOULD we move Mount Fuji.

Jeff Goldblum on Jan 19, 2010

This is a common dorky Computer Science joke. The answer I believe they are looking for is that you use the Tower of Hanoi algorithm to move the mountain (i.e. that the problem of moving Mt. Fuji is reducible to the already-solved Tower of Hanoi problem). This could be accomplished by having a large laser and a couple of really good cranes.

Joe in New York on Jan 19, 2010

I would take a single picture of it from a specific location which showed a prominent item in the foreground. Then, I would move between 500 yards and one mile, depending upon the visibility and the size of the foreground object, and take another picture. Viewing the two pics side by side, it would appear that Fuji moved.

jim on Jan 19, 2010

I know nothing about being a software engineer - however I do know Mt. Fuji. I would never wish to move Mt. Fuji because it's ideally situated close enough to Tokyo yet just far enough away to feel like a real "getaway" from the city. Also, scenically, its geographic position is interesting in each and every season - as Japanese artists throughout history have repeatedly demonstrated. A more difficult question is how to effectively move yourself UP Mt. Fuji. You have to be in very good shape. It will take more than one day. And it is not nearly as scenic on top (more like a moon crater - since it's volcanic) as it is viewed from a distance.

Jean on Jan 19, 2010

The answer to this is simple. "One shovelful at a time."

Chris on Jan 19, 2010

Locate the exact horizontal center of the mass of the mountain. Simply take a handful of earth from one side and place in on the opposite side of the center. This relocates the center of the mountain by a smidge, but you can say that you have moved the mountain.

Dan Hogan on Jan 20, 2010

Prayer can move mountains!

Roberta Richardson on Jan 30, 2010

Mount Fuji is a dead volcano. Put a nuke in it and blow it to the space.

Edward Wang on Feb 4, 2010
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Mt. Fuji is already moving very fast. If, however, the question is about how to move Mt Fuji to somewhere else on the planet, then I wouldn't waste anyone's time: not all things that can be done, should be done. The environmental and cultural costs would outweigh any short-term benefit.

I'd pick up the picture frame I'd bought in Japan from my desk and set it on the mantelpiece.

Dixon on Oct 3, 2013
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Why Mt. Fuji? Why not another mt? Do we have permission and paperwork? Mt. Fuji is a volcano and work required to move this mt. will take a very lone time so it's very possible that Mt. Fuji could erupt especially since we would be disturbing it. Are we expected to stop the flow of magma underneath? It is my opinion that moving Mt. Fuji is very dangerous and unwise. What ever person or group who decided to move Mt. Fuji should be seriously questioned for rational thinking unless Japan or the Earth is in extreme danger. If so the outcome could be worst than Fukushima.

Me on Jan 11, 2014

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Cranes

Anonymous on Mar 13, 2015

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mv /mnt/fuji

Guillaume on Mar 14, 2015

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judging from the question itself, the interviewer obviously wants for you to provide some options and elaborate on those. So basically you should just shoot answers by estimating time vs cost vs risk, not the rationale behind.
The answers you've given would more fit for a question "you've been given a task to move mountain Fuji. How will you do it"

John on Mar 15, 2015