

Vish, 11:06 AM

Hi Michelle. I received an email this morning from Nicholas Piecora to contact you via Skype regarding a screening interview for a junior software engineer position at Byram Healthcare. The email says that the window for availability is today and tomorrow from 10AM - 5PM. I'd like to see what time slots are currently open and schedule a meeting. Thanks!

Michelle, 11:08 AM

Hello! How are you doing? Welcome to the interview session for the Junior Software Engineer courtesy of Byram Healthcare Centers, Inc. It's nice having you here.

Vish, 11:09 AM

Thanks!

Michelle, 11:09 AM

I'm available at the moment till 5PM. Can i know your availability for the interview?

Vish, 11:09 AM

I'm available right now as well, if it works for you - the kids are occupied, so its a nice, quiet time at the moment. ;)

Vish, 11:11 AM

If you'd like to schedule something for later during the day, I should be able to accommodate most time slots before 4:30.

Michelle, 11:14 AM

Sounds good! The screening interview briefing session is via Skype instant message chat. Please introduce yourself with the projects you did and your skills briefly. I'll like to know if you're currently employed and the City, State you're located.

Vish, 11:19 AM

I'm currently employed by CovetCare, Inc., in New York. At work, I'm the main designer for our software. We provide clinical software (an EMR) for nursing homes. I've been there for 17 years. My family moved out west to California this July for my wife's new job. She's the library director at CalArts. We're in Santa Clarita.

Regarding projects, I've been building web applications, mainly using JavaScript, React, Node and Express. I use JavaScript and React for the front-end (the stuff that appears in your browser) and Node & Express for the back-end (the side that deals with business logic and connects with databases - the side users don't actually see). Recently, I've been building websites as well, mainly using Next.JS, which is a React framework.

Vish, 11:23 AM

At CovetCare, I started out as the primary tech support person, but as I learned about the software and about clinical logic in general, I gradually took on more and more of a design role, until I was the person who was going over all of the Medicare and Medicaid changes, the CMS updates and nursing standards, and other things, and then writing up our design specs and designing the user interface that our developers would add logic to. Initially, I did my design work using programs like Front Page and Expression Web (we're a Microsoft shop) but later on, I learned how to code and write my own front-end code to hand off to the developers.

Vish, 11:24 AM

I was also the primary person, along with our founder, who went to client sites to handle trainings and to get client feedback and bring that back to share with the team. That whole side of things very strongly influenced how I work and how I build user interfaces. Its a balancing act, between user requests and federal & state regulations.

Vish, 11:25 AM

A recent project I did, that wasn't for work, was building the website for Breast Cancer Comfort, a cancer charity also based out of NY.

Vish, 11:26 AM

I like to reach out to groups whose missions align with my own values and try to help them with websites.

Michelle, 11:31 AM

Sounds wonderfully interesting! It's my pleasure having you here. We'd love to learn more about you and introduce you to opportunities at Byram Healthcare. We are recruiting via online potential employees who would eventually have an office space at home. Note that the Company will be setting up a Mini office for you at home if you are hired at the end of this interview, for proper calculation of your hour. This is going to be an online and work from home job. The working hours are flexible where you could choose to work from anywhere of your choice.

Vish, 11:32 AM

That sounds great. I'd love to provide you with any information you need for your decision process.

Michelle, 11:38 AM

The ideal candidate should have the following qualities and skills: Analyzing Information, Software Design, Software Documentation, Software Testing, Teamwork, General Programming Skills, Software Development Fundamentals, Software Development Process, Software Requirements, Software Architecture, Coaching. We know you're capable of handling the position. All we require is professionalism. We need a documentation of your briefing on here for future purpose. Follow the briefing carefully and answer the questions after understanding each line.

Vish, 11:39 AM

I try my best to be professional at all times. I'm ready for your questionnaire, if you'd like to send it.

Michelle, 11:41 AM

Kindly please answer and explain the following questions listed. How do you stay up-to-date with changes in technology? For example, do you ever attend seminars or contribute to open source software projects? How do you meet tough deadlines? Tell me about a time you completed great work under pressure. Tell me about your experience working remotely. What do you feel is important to make sure the work gets done efficiently?

Vish, 12:13 PM

Keeping up with technology changes:

I read a lot about technology changes. I'm on at least a dozen developer-centric groups on Reddit, subscribe to various technology blogs (I have one of my own as well), follow other developers and tech leaders on Twitter and (far too many) on YouTube. I've attended virtual seminars since COVID but

haven't done a lot with open-source yet. In place of that, I've been building sites for groups like Breast Cancer Comfort as well as other sites (I'm in the midst of one right now for a designer who lives close to Washington DC) and this year, I started a small LLC as an outlet for the creative side of web building and web design. I'm using that right now to give a more formalized branding to the websites I build for organizations and individuals.

Deadlines:

Meeting tough deadlines really comes down to understanding the scope of the project as well as possible and having a plan to achieve each step towards project completion. I actually follow a framework called UPER. Its an acronym for Understand, Plan, Execute, Reflect.

The Understand phase is the most important of them. I try to precisely grasp the problem or need and ask questions so that I can move with a solid idea of what has to be built. Its important here to consider inputs (what data am I working with) and outputs (what am I producing or returning).

The Planning phase is where I conceptualize and write out what my process and parts will be to solve the problem. I try to come up with an actionable plan that meets what we call MVP, or minimal viable product. This is the core solution that functionally resolves the task. I might use pseudocode for this part, or an outline or diagram of components. Its basically the blueprint for what will come.

Execution is the actual coding work. This is when I take the blueprint from above and actually craft the code to complete the mission. I try to document as I write code, so that I (or others) can later understand why decisions were made, and think about future improvements, if needed.

The Reflect phase is when I finally take a breather and then review what I've built and see if anything can be done to make it better. This could be more performant code, improvements to the design or user interface, speaking with others on the team for their input and, naturally, user feedback.

Its a simple process, but it does take a little bit of explaining for people to understand. I've found that the initial Understand phase is really the most-important of all. When I first started coding, I'd go right to code, and then edge cases that I hadn't initially thought of would sneak up and cause me to complicate things to account for them, so I do my best to really analyze and understand before committing code and time to the task.

Work Under Pressure:

Every year, CMS releases updates to the MDS system. Its an acronym for Minimum Data Set, but its anything but minimal. Its the federal system under which all nursing homes in the country are reimbursed for providing care to residents. There are about a dozen variants of an MDS form, based on payer and clinical information for a resident. They move at different schedules, the state makes use of it at their own schedule, and some of the 'minimal' amounts of information are more than 20 pages in length. They cover all aspects of a resident's care - nursing, dietary, psychosocial, therapeutic activities, PT/OT/ST and more - and this is without the payer information on top of it.

Every year the MDS is updated and my team has to understand all of the changes and implement them in our system. There's a major revision in the spring and a minor update in the fall. The bulk of this work falls on my shoulders, initially. I have to go over every detail of the updates and map them to our system so that our team can make the needed changes. All of our facilities rely on us getting this right so that they can get paid and not incur penalties which they'd then have to pay for. Its stressful, but its part of the main purpose of our software.

There have been times when we really burned the midnight oil over significant changes - like when CMS upgraded the entire MDS from v2.0 to v3.0. It was a complete rewrite of the entire system, and we had to mirror it in real-time. But, the short answer to the question about working under pressure is that every year, we face this challenge, and it takes us months of preparation and effort, but we persevere, plan ahead, research and act together to get it done. Its Olympic. ;)

Efficiency:

Working as a team, and really adhering to UPER is what gets me through large projects in a timely manner and with minimal need for making major changes to what's been built. I know I've already written a lot about my build and design process, so I won't harp on it more (sorry for the length of this reply). I hope the above answers your questions thoroughly!

Michelle, 12:15 PM

How would you negotiate a bigger budget for your team? How regularly do you schedule meetings with your team members? What metrics do you use to monitor your team's performance? What are the first things you would check in a legacy system that has frequent downtime? Have you ever identified a potential problem and proactively implemented a software solution?

Vish, 12:45 PM

Budget negotiations:

To negotiate a larger budget, I would have to demonstrate need. The project manager or client has to be made aware of the scope of the project and our solution for it - but in an understandable manner. Its a bit like designing a dashboard: provide a high-level overview of what needs to be met, and why those needs have a particular time or cost value. Then, drill deeper into individual parts of the solution as needed, so that an understanding of time and cost needs can be conveyed. If the person I'm speaking with doesn't want to budge, then they have to understand that concessions will need to be made. This means that other features might need to be removed or deprioritized or that deadlines will need to be made more malleable.

There's potentially a lot of work and different approaches needed to answer this though, because with this side of things, we're not dealing with technology. We're dealing with personalities and other people's priorities. Its more art than science, in many regards.

Team meetings:

Personally, I like to have a brief meeting every day. Not right as people get started, but definitely before midday. I like to try to keep the ship on course and understand who's in rough waters and how to help them. (I also like the same courtesy extended towards me, because I feel like it helps build more of a team.)

Performance metrics:

This is really two-fold. I don't have a hard set of metrics for measuring performance. I do look at two things, at a high level though: whether we're completing tasks and how my team members feel. The first is necessary to complete the mission. Our purpose is to provide a solution for whatever task is at hand, but the second is what determines the quality of our work and speed of its completion. Even though we work with technology, we're building things for people, and on the flip side of that, we're not machines ourselves, we're also people. I try to keep a balance of psychological happiness with productivity as best as I can, but I can't really put hard numbers to any of it, aside from looking at projects and tasks completed, timeframes and general morale.

Downtime:

To analyze downtime, I'd first have to learn what's happening. Does the issue happen at a scheduled interval? When a user performs a certain action? Is there some other clue as to what's causing the downtime? Can I observe what's happening?

Once I have details, I'd try to determine if the issue is hardware or software-related. Is internet connectivity (or if internal, network connectivity) an issue? Is there a server setting problem? Are users working with adequate technology? If the issue happens during a specific action, I'd see if I can replicate the issue and determine if there's a problem with the code or any of its dependencies causing downtime. Some users can confuse actual downtime, like a system being completely unavailable, with lag, which is when data is being transmitted and maybe even has an issue that causes it to not reach its destination. This latency can appear as downtime, if its long enough, but is more of a connectivity issue.

Proactively implementing solutions:

I've done this both with our own software and in my previous life at CovetCare, when I had more of a support role. With regard to our software, every year, with the MDS updates, we have to review how our system works and make sure that its flow connects with that which CMS defines. It can get hard, because there are a lot of moving pieces. Its not just 1-to-1 data entry - entering information in one of our Nursing assessments might affect information in a Physical Therapy assessment, or a Nutritional assessment, or impact payer modules, or various risk assessments. Each of these forms (there are dozens) can populate different sections of a federal MDS form differently, based on which permutation of the form is needed for submission.

A lot of answering this question comes down to familiarity with our product (and in tech terms, knowledge of the codebase) and understanding federal and state regulations, as well as other standards that inform our design.

Prior to design work, when I went onsite to clients for training and information-gathering purposes, I very often ended up acting as their I/T. Many nursing homes don't have a dedicated I/T department, or even a regular person. I would often help set up software and hardware for them, and suggest workflows - sometimes for a specific person or department, and other times for inter-departmental collaboration. More than a few of our program features have come from client onsites in which I worked with clients to learn how best to support them in their tasks and then wrote our specs for our team to use to revise our system or even introduce entirely new features. In a very real way, everything that we produce at CovetCare is a software solution to a potential or existing problem.

Michelle, 12:49 PM

What would you do if a very talented Software Engineer on your team kept questioning your decisions? How would you address the individual? What techniques would you choose to motivate disengaged employees? What ideas would you give to a new team member? What's the best way to onboard a new hire?

Vish, 1:18 PM

Questioning decisions:

I actually don't mind people questioning my decisions, as long as its not done in a negative or hostile manner. People all have their own strengths, and if these questions were coming from a talented person who had a strong understanding of whatever was in question (code, business logic, or something else) I

would listen to that feedback to determine if what was being suggested was, in fact, an improvement to my own solution. This can actually be a teaching moment, both from my to the other person, and vice versa, depending on the situation.

If the person was questioning my decisions more negatively, then we'd be dealing with a different issue. I tend to tackle these situations directly, but again, we're dealing with personalities. So, if its someone who was being outspoken but had a more fragile personality, I might try to find out why that person was addressing me the way that he or she was. If the person was someone who had a more dominant personality, I wouldn't necessarily have to tread as lightly, but I'd still want to understand why my decisions were being questioned in a non-constructive manner before I determined how to proceed.

Motivating disengaged employees:

This is also a symptom of the human condition. I would want to find out why the person had become disengaged - is it a personal issue? Is the work not rewarding? Do they feel neglected in terms of payment or recognition? People aren't software, but I might still apply some UPER to the situation - understand why the person is disengaged, come up with a plan to rectify the situation, execute that plan if it was in my power (it could be something out of my hands, if its a personal situation) and then reflect, with the person-in-question, as to whether the situation is stabilizing or improving.

Ideally though, I'd be in contact with my team enough to stop things from ever reaching this point. Its more cost-effective to be proactive than reactive when retaining talent.

New team member ideas:

This question has different answers depending on the context. If its task-related, I would let the new team member know how I approached a given task. I'd talk about potential pitfalls with other methods, if they were known. If its personality-related, I might left the new team member know who I've approached for help with certain issues, or who they might not want to approach for an issue if I know that its an issue that the third person didn't take well to. If the new team member was struggling with certain programming concepts or feeling the dreaded impostor syndrome, I'd share resources that have helped me to understand various programming topics, or even just lend an ear to hear their anxieties. Ideally, the ideas would be more focused on food though. I explore the world using my tastebuds. ;)

Onboarding:

New hires need to get acclimated to their environment and know who to go to with questions and what resources are available for them to do their own research. They also need to feel appreciated and like they're part of a team. I think the best ways to onboard new hires is to provide them with these things - let them know who they can lean on as a mentor, and try to provide a mentor who's interested in helping to grow others, not someone who will approach this as an interruption of their own work or as an additional chore. Make procedural resources available. I know some companies have intranets with workflows and policies and other resources available for both new hires and established employees. I'd make sure that the new hire knew where to find these, and had a good idea of what was in each of them so that they could make use of them independently.

Also, if the nature of the position allows it, I'd start the new hire off with simpler tasks and grow their complexity over time, so that the person learns the environment, workflows and gains an understanding as to why systems are in place and why they're constructed in a given manner. That understanding helps them to operate in a manner that gels with existing thought, but also allows them to contextualize these flows with their own experience, which can either help them to adopt workflows, or suggest revisions to existing ones.

Michelle, 1:23 PM

Walk me through your portfolio. Which pieces are you most proud of, and why? What does Accountability mean to you? How long would you expect to work for us if hired? What type of software have you worked with? How much will you request per hour if you are hired?

Michelle, 1:41 PM

DUTIES WILL INCLUDE: Develop and implement digital technology solutions with appropriate software design methodology in a dynamic and fast paced team environment
Perform all phases of the software development life cycle including requirements analysis, application design, code development and testing and client interaction
Write tests in an existing Java-based test suite that confirms successful implementation of code
Troubleshoot production support issues post-deployment and create solutions as required
Assist in creation of technical documentation as part of client deliverables
Collaborate and work in an agile team environment.

Write technical specifications based on conceptual design and stated business requirements.
Support, maintain, and document software functionality. Identify and evaluate new technologies for implementation.
Analyze code to find causes of errors and revise programs as needed.
Participate in software design meetings and analyze user needs to determine technical requirements.
Participate in full development life cycle including requirements analysis and design.

Vish, 1:55 PM

Portfolio:

My professional work at CovetCare isn't something I can show via chat, but its what I'm most proud of. Over the years, we've built a solid, clinically-based system that supports frontline workers and (this is the reason I joined CovetCare) keeps people's family members alive. Nurses love our program because our founder was a nurse for more than 40 years and initially developed our system as a family of paper forms meant to systematize their work. It was efficient, compliant with state and federal regulations and its flow was rooted in nursing standards of practice, so it was something that clinicians were comfortable with. We turned that into software, made it interactive, grew it to serve other departments, built a whole reporting system based off of the clinical and financial data, made it interoperate with other companies' programs (finance, labs, quality assurance, etc.) and let their work - their clinical assessments and care plans - automatically populate the MDS and let them submit their MDSes electronically for reimbursement. It was fantastic. It took us years to build, and the technologies and platforms changed over each major version.

Regarding the work I've done since learning how to code, this is a link to my portfolio: <https://vish213-portfolio-v3.netlify.app/>

I'm proud of my recent work with creating Iconic Web Solutions, so I can help other companies, with Breast Cancer Comfort, because their mission is near-and-dear to my heart, with the styling of the 2nd version of my digital resume, even though its cliché in the programming world - with my first to-do list application because its a trial-by-fire that all programmers have to go through and I expanded it past a to-do list to also include a shopping list and general notes.

I'm also proud of my programming blog (<https://neophyte.home.blog/>). I've been writing blogs since around 2010 and the most recent one was my programming blog, which I've used to share resources,

teach others what I'm learning and generally codify the concepts I've learned in a way that can be useful to others.

Accountability:

Accountability is about ownership of responsibility. It's about integrity and communication and working to complete tasks. Completing tasks is like keeping your word, to me. If I say something will get done, I have to make my best effort to get it done, and I have to know when to ask for help if the task proves bigger than anticipated (basically an imperfect understanding phase in UPER). There's individual accountability, which would fall on my shoulders, but there's also group responsibility, which is shared by my team members and ultimately, by the company as a whole.

Length of tenure:

As long as there are tasks that need to get done, and both the company and I are growing, I'd expect to remain there indefinitely (as evidenced by my being at CovetCare for 17 years - the end of this month will make it 18). I want stability for myself and my family.

Software:

With regard to software development, I mainly use VS Code to write my code. I've used Insomnia and Postman for API testing, TablePlus for working with SQL databases, git (its lowercase) and GitHub for version control (I use Git BASH as my terminal for working with GitHub) and I most frequently deploy projects to Netlify, although I've also used Vercel and Heroku for back-end deploys.

Outside of that, I use Photoshop to work with images, have used WordPress and various GUI-based site-builder add-ins for it like Divi and Elementor, and use Google Docs to keep notes for projects. I have several private repositories on GitHub with sample code that I reference when building projects. At some point, when I feel it's complete enough, I plan on making the deployed version of the main repo of that type publicly available for others to use. Several other junior developers have used it and it's helped them with their own projects.

Salary request:

I'd like my salary to be competitive with others in the region, so I'm hoping for the \$70k range.

Michelle, 2:02 PM

If you are hired at the end of this briefing, you will undergo 3-4 days training prior starting the work. Also, this is a remote long time full time position which can be done from a home office. The working hours are flexible. You can choose to work from anytime of your choice. The hourly pay is \$45 and while training is \$20 hourly. Salaries in Check form and Direct deposit weekly.

Vish, 2:04 PM

I understand. Let me know if I need to provide any other information for a decision to be made.

Vish, 2:05 PM

I hope what I've submitted has been adequate, and I apologize for the wall-of-text form of some of the answers.

Michelle, 2:07 PM

You'll have to stand by while I forward your interview answers to the hiring board. This will take few minutes while they finalize. Kindly please hold for their decision. I will keep you updated with the Hiring Board confirmation. Thank you

Vish, 2:07 PM
Thank you!

Michelle, 2:48 PM

Congratulations! Due to your level of experience and your working skills, I'm delighted to inform you that the Company has decided to hire you as one of our staff. You are now a staff of the company. and we hope to see the best in you. You will receive your duties everyday via email and the team will be online to assist you with any difficulties. You will be undergoing 3-4 days training through the Skype live chat video, soon as your home office is setup. The starting pay is \$45 per hour and will come every Friday of the week via Direct deposit or check, depending on which you prefer.

Michelle, 2:48 PM

HR will email you the employment paperwork tomorrow. You will be enrolled for other benefits after a period of 3 months of working with us. Benefits include: Health, Dental and AD&D Insurance, Employee Wellness and 401k plans, Paid Time Off and Holidays with Generous Company Discounts. Also, a user and password will be given to you including an up link to the healthcare server and a list of contact phone numbers to various departments will be sent to you including all necessary forms to fill out.

Vish, 2:49 PM
Thank you!

Vish, 2:50 PM

I look forward to the email.

Michelle, 2:53 PM

Enumerated are the required office supplies : iMac Pro eight-core, 3.2GHz processor includes 27-inch 5Kdisplay Hp LaserJet Pro M15w Printer. External hard drive/backup system. Headset with microphone. Networking and router capabilities. Surge Protectors and Automated Time Tracker. ProofHub. GitHub. Adobe Dreamweaver CC. Crimson Editor. Source: Phpirate/Wikimedia Commons. Crimson Editor is a freeware text editor by the team behind Microsoft Windows. It is a professional source code and HTML editor that serves as an apt replacement for products like Notepad.. Bitbucket. Codenvy. Axosoft. LeanKit.

Michelle, 2:53 PM

You will receive a payment(Check) This payment check will be used to set up your mini office by purchasing the office equipment and software so that you can start your training immediately.

Vish, 2:56 PM
That sounds great.

Michelle, 2:58 PM

NOTE: All materials are to be purchased from the company accredited vendor, I will provide you with the vendor information when you receive the check.

Vish, 2:58 PM
Thanks. ;)

Michelle, 2:59 PM

You are to immediately forward the following information to enable the HR secretary register you and prepare your offer letter:

Your Full Name:

Full Home Address(APT Number):

Home/Cell Phone number:

Your Email :

Please email the requested information above to: info@hrbyramhealth.com

Michelle, 3:00 PM

Let me know when that is done so that we can continue with the remaining information you need to know.

Vish, 3:07 PM

Ok, its been sent.

Michelle, 3:10 PM

Okay good. You will be receiving your Employment Offer Letter via e-mail to sign tomorrow. Our aim is for you to start training next week. Is there anything I haven't told you about the job or healthcare that you would like to know?

Michelle, 3:10 PM

For clarification, i would like you to provide me with the same information you sent HR. Thank you

Vish, 3:11 PM

I can't think of anything at the moment, but thanks. I need to run for a few. I've been away from the kids for the whole morning and there have been several meltdowns. Thanks again!

Michelle, 3:15 PM

For clarification, i would like you to provide me with the same information you sent HR. Thank you ?