

You Don't Need a Computer Science Degree to Land a Job at FAANG

What are the things that you need for a career in tech? The right skills, determination, and the ability to problem-solve and work through challenges.

But we wanted to take a second and focus on one thing that you don't need to make it in tech: a degree in computer science!

Surprised? Many people outside of the tech industry think you need a CS degree to land a job in tech. You might think you need to uproot your life, spend thousands of dollars, and invest a ton of time to earn a CS degree for a tech career.

But we're here to tell you once and for all: you do not need a computer science degree to land a job at FAANG.

Still don't believe us? Let's see what Safir Merchant, who in spite of not having a CS degree joined Facebook as a Machine Learning Engineer after completing Interview Kickstart's program, has to say.

What triggered your desire to switch jobs? And why did you choose Interview Kickstart?

When I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2017, I met a man who told me I should stay at my former company because I didn't have a CS degree. He said there weren't many opportunities for people like me at FAANG. And honestly, I believed him for a little while.

But then, I met a few friends who had a similar background as me, and they were getting interviews at FAANG. That's when I realized it wasn't about having a CS degree, so I started preparing for tech interviews on my own.

But there's so much information available on the internet that you don't really know what is needed and how much to learn about a particular subject. I was looking at some technical interview preparation courses and was referred to Interview Kickstart by another alum. I attended Soham Mehta's session, and that's what got me into IK.

The three biggest advantages that that IK has when compared to any other course are:

- A structured syllabus
- Mock interviews to get detailed feedback
- A peer group to work with

These factors and more helped me choose IK as my prep course.

How did you find the time to prepare for interviews while working and seeking a job offer?

It didn't take long. Interview Kickstart's technical interview preparation helped me get a job offer.

Many people think their age or lack of a computer science degree will hold them back.

But I'm here to say it's not about where you are or what you've done in the past. It's about what you can do going forward. I think that's the most significant piece of advice I can give anybody. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do this. You can do anything! Just formulate a process to get there.

Hope Safir's story showed you how a CS degree doesn't really matter when it comes to cracking FAANG interviews. It's all about dedication and how well you prepare. To get started, join a live, technical interview preparation webinar with our founder who will take you through how to nail complex technical interviews the Interview Kickstart way! And guess what? It's absolutely FREE! Details for joining this workshop will be sent by email after you register.

How to Get Your Dream Job at a FAANG Company

Have you dreamt of locking dream offers from Facebook or Google? A great many software engineers aspire to land attractive jobs at FAANG companies, but only a handful of them manage to beat the highly competitive pool.

If you didn't know this already, Facebook and Google select only about 2% of engineers who apply. The reason for such a low acceptance rate is that FAANG recruiters don't particularly pick developers based on how bright their academic or professional stints have been. They look for seasoned problem solvers who have the ability to solve complex modern-day engineering and technology challenges; something they don't quite find in too many candidates. That's precisely why you should polish your problem solving skills to ace the interview rounds at tier-1 companies.

Preparing for FAANG interviews is a coordinated and calibrated process. You can't expect to crack these interviews by being smart alone. You'll have to ready yourself for the grind and trust the process without getting too caught up or absorbed in the outcome. Putting in the hard work is important, yes. But what's equally important is executing the right strategy.

The bottom line - getting your dream job at FAANG is a combination of will, persistence, strategy, and execution.

In this article, we'll look at what exactly you must do to land offers from FAANG companies.

How to get your dream job at a FAANG company?

Trust the process and embrace the grind

If you want to get past the taxing interview rounds at FAANG companies, you must truly be ready to put in the hours and embrace the grind. The timeline of your interview prep is crucial - it is the first thing you must consider. Not giving yourself sufficient time can render you underprepared and under confident, thereby precluding you from giving your best shot.

The ideal time-length to prepare for FAANG interviews is 2-3 months (9-12 weeks). Anything less than that would leave you with little time to cover the important programming concepts, practice enough problems around them, and revise.

A huge percentage of engineers who interview at FAANG companies are experienced. If you are currently working a job, you should very well be prepared to put in the hours regardless of how demanding or strenuous your work is.

A good start would be to dedicate at least 8-10 hours a week toward solving problems in algorithms and data structures. Solving numerous problems amps up your problem solving skills, enabling you to identify patterns in questions and solve problems that you haven't encountered before.

As such, effective problem solving is a powerful weapon to wield at FAANG interviews. We can safely declare that the line between landing an offer and getting rejected is drawn by the extent of your problem solving skills.

Get good with algorithms and data structures

Algorithms and data structures are the most important topics that feature in technical interviews at FAANG companies. Mastering your coding skills to solve complex algorithmic problems is the only way to get past the grueling interview rounds.

While you go about your prep, don't bust your hump preparing in haste. Getting good with algorithms and data structures takes time. Technically, learning and understanding the concepts isn't all that hard. But to apply them to problem solving is a different game altogether.

You should ideally spend the first 3-4 weeks practicing as many problems as possible around DS and algorithms. Here's what you should cover in the first 3-4 weeks of your prep:

- Arrays, Strings and Linked Lists
- Sorting algorithms - quick sort, merge sort, heap sort etc.
- Hash tables and Queues
- Recursion
- Trees and Graphs

- Graph algorithms including greedy algorithms
- Dynamic programming

Brush up your design knowledge

Distributed systems design is an important part of On-site interviews at FAANG companies. It isn't unknown that companies like Google and Facebook employ complex, scalable engineering systems to reach millions of internet users everyday. As a software engineer, knowing the fundamentals of systems design along with possessing the ability to design such systems with low latency.

If you're not familiar with concepts in distributed systems design, you can consider enrolling for an interview prep course that focuses on training you for the design interview. Note that if you're a complete beginner, you might want to spend at least a month preparing concepts in engineering design. Here's what you should essentially cover for your systems design interview:

- Scalable systems
- Concurrency
- API modelling
- Sharding techniques
- Database management

Practice mock interviews with FAANG instructors

Mock interviews are a brilliant way to know where you're lacking and what you must do to improve. While considering mock interviews, it is mighty important to practice with hiring managers or technical leads who're conversant with the interview process at FAANG companies. That's because such professionals are equipped with the right experience and knowledge to give you the right feedback.

If you want to practice live mocks with technical leads and hiring managers, enrol for Interview Kickstart's Masterclass today!

Prepare for behavioral interviews

It isn't hearsay that even polished programmers get rejected at FAANG interviews because of falling short in behavioral rounds.

Practicing questions to behavioral interviews is extremely important as FAANG recruiters have become increasingly inclined towards hiring developers who are level-headed, hard-working and integrous.

Dive deep into competitive programming

Preparing for coding challenges, especially those hosted by FAANG companies, is a brilliant way to improve your problem-solving skills and get interview-ready. Even if you don't specifically prepare for challenges, solving problems on platforms like Leetcode and Topchef can help you solve a variety of problems and improve your exposure.

Be ready to go at it again

Did you appear for a FAANG interview recently but failed to make the cut? Well, you should definitely pull your sleeves up and give it another go. A lot of engineers who end up getting offers at FAANG and tier-1 companies have also failed their first one or two interviews. The only difference between them and you (if you didn't make it the first time around) is that they tried again.

Get over interview anxiety

Interview anxiety can leave even experienced programmers scratching their heads. Even accomplished coders can be found wanting at interviews if they succumb to interview anxiety. If you've experienced interview anxiety in the past and strongly feel it could interfere with your performance, you must definitely get help.

Check out this comprehensive guide on dealing with interview anxiety to learn how to overcome it and prevent it from coming in the way of your performance.

The ideal FAANG interview prep timeline

Day 1-15

- Learn the fundamentals of algorithms data structures.
- Sign up for a training course if you have to. Enrolling for a good program will give you the direction that you exactly need
- Attend technical interview webinars to get an idea of the current technical interview landscape.

Day 16-40

- Look up company-specific information about the interview process and culture in general.
- Solve commonly asked company-related interview questions. Understand the various rounds specific to the company, and dig up candidate

experiences and interview archives.

- Solve at least 3 problems a day. Don't mug up solutions - always seek to test the limits of your ability by allowing yourself to think about solutions deeply and intently.

Day 41-50

- Practice mock interviews with experts and hiring managers. The more mock interviews you practice, the better.
- Practice mocks with hiring managers/instructors who are currently employed with the company of your interest.

Day 51-60

- Spend a few days revising concepts in Object Oriented Programming while you continue solving problems.
- Optimize your LinkedIn profile to include the right keywords and update your resume.
- Revise concepts in database management systems and computer networks

9 Reasons you should work at FAANG as a Data Scientist in 2022

In the last 12 months, instamenter.com has successfully helped many people land a job at FAANG companies and alike.

Cumulatively their additional salary has been increased to 2 million.

~~if that is not enough~~ This campaign is to 5x this number to help people gain an extra \$10 million.

Why you should join FAANG as a data scientist

In addition to high income, here are a few other reasons that I think why you should consider joining FAANG as a data scientist in 2022.

Here are 9 points that you should consider:

1. Opportunities

Even though FAANG companies have already gained significant market shares, they are (unsurprisingly) still growing rapidly.

a. Take Apple, for example. When I first joined in 2014, their stock price was about \$18 per share, and it recently reached an all-time high of \$182, 10Xed in the last seven years.

b. The other FAANG companies shared a similar story, if not growing faster.

Amazon's stock was about \$110 per share when I joined in early 2011. Today's price is \$3300 at market close, and their stock price has grown 30 times over the last ten years.

With the hyper-growth (stock price usually reflects the company's business growth) trajectory, accompanied usually means a lot of internal opportunities for you to work on.

~~You are~~ You are more likely to get promoted in a company that is growing fast.

2. Networking

You will likely meet impressive people, peers, and leaders that you will develop a world-class professional network.

As a former employee at Amazon and Apple, I got a chance to meet many very sharp engineers and product managers and it was a great experience.

based annual bonus + one-time sign-on bonus.

And because their stock price has been performing well over the last few years, we have a solid reason they will continue to do well, which means the stock portion of your income will likely grow as well.

We've seen people joining FAANG and double their annual income in their first year, compared to their last job.

5. Business problems

When the data's volume, velocity, and variety becomes in very large scale, so come many different exciting and sometimes challenging problems.

For example, when you build machine learning models, the same model that worked great for the US market may fail at an Asian market.

6. Visa

FAANG companies are very friendly and supportive of your temporary visa (OPT), work visa (H1-B, O1, L1), or your green card application.

Suppose you are an international student who just graduated. In that case, FAANG companies have many years of experience helping you get a visa.

In some edge cases, if you didn't win this year's H1-B lottery, they have many international offices where you can work there temporarily while participating in next year's H1B visa drawing.

Once you get your H1-B visa, they will also help you relocate back to the United States.

7. Job security

Generally speaking, the Macroeconomy goes up and down in an economic cycle; usually, it's about every 10-15 years.

In 2000, there was the dot com bubble crash. So many tech companies went bankrupt, lots of people lost their job.

The same thing happened in 2007 - 2008.

When the market crashes, many companies will start laying off people, not because of their work performance, but simply because they have to cut budget to survive.

Companies with the best cash flow and balance sheet provide a safe harbor for their employees during a crisis, and FAANG companies tend to have excellent cash flow.

8. Matured process

FAANG companies usually have a formal process to present and share your analytics insights and move things forward.

And before you share your critical information with important business stakeholders, you will usually be asked to peer review your SQL or Python code to avoid any data issues.

9. Others

Of course, there are other benefits such as making your parents and family proud. My parents kept telling everybody that I was working at the world's largest tech company when I joined ☐ Apple. :)

Most of the FAANG companies' headquarter is in silicon valley, which has one of the best weather patterns in the world. So if you like sun, hiking, skiing, surfing, the San Francisco bay area is a great place to be.

Get mentored and become 100% job interview ready for your Data Scientist Job interview, learn directly from former FAANG hiring managers, **BOOK YOUR SESSION TODAY.**

The Best Part Of Working At FAANG? Getting The Job

I'm not a FAANG lover (for those unfamiliar with the term, it refers to Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google). Don't get me wrong - I think they're great companies, and they've all made a significant impact on Society.

But young peeps look at FAANG and salivate. "Oh my god, could you Imagine getting a job at <Google, Apple>" they say to their friends. "That would be, like, winning the Career Lottery." And their parents, who likely don't know any better, agree, and encourage the FAANG obsession. Career centers and many career coaches aren't any better, as they have a lot to gain by encouraging FAANG mania.

So the FAANG job announcement on social media is the young person's ticket to Instant Celebrity. Thousands of likes for getting that SWE job (software engineer, for those not familiar with the lingo), the jealousy of all their peers, and complete satisfaction that the person winning this Lottery Ticket is A Worthy And Important Person.

Quite frankly, this is all quite garish and gross. It's the worst of our capitalist society. Kudos for their achievement, but it's excessive.

However, for the FAANG job winner, this is as good as it gets. It's not a surprise that after the job announcement is made, the employee disappears from social media.

"Well duh, Jon, they're busy with their super important job. Why would they need to be on Social Media?"

Sure, there's some truth here. Working at top software companies is stressful and keeps you busy. But there's more to it than that.

The fact of the matter is that working at FAANG is just another Big Corporate Job. And no one wants to be the one who comes out and admits this. The highlight reel of getting the job was perfect, and the reality of The Work is an inconvenient truth.

So what is the reality of the work?

A lot of politics. Divisional factions. High stress and "perform or you're out" (particularly at Netflix and Amazon). Lack of impact due to So Many Employees. Nothing Gets Done because there are too many cooks in the kitchen. Sure, the perks are nice, but the job itself is just another job.

I won't get into why FAANG is so important to people. It is what it is. But the reality is that working at a job is never a perfect panacea, FAANG included. Keep that in mind the next time you're jealous of your peer who's gloating in your face how Special They Are for winning the Golden Ticket.

My Top LinkedIn Posts From Last Week (In Case You Missed Them)

Employers that ask for ample "previous experience" for entry level positions are just plain stupid.

Why?

Because less experienced folks have fewer bad habits to correct, and therefore have fewer ways of hurting the company. They're totally open books, and if they have a Growth Mindset, they can learn to do things The Right Way.

A great attitude, curiosity, and passion for the job beats experience any day of the week.

Requiring experience for entry level peeps is actually hurting corporations. So stop the stupidity for everyone's sake.

I never hired an employee because they had an A average.

Quite frankly, I never really cared.

And yet, students insist on competing against each other to be the best of the best.

This is nonsensical. Grades don't prove your worth to employers.

So what should you care about instead?

The love of learning, and the love of critical thinking. Those two things will serve you much better than outcompeting other peeps for The Unneeded Carrot.

I've had thousands of conversations with young professionals, and the only thing they share in common is that they have no clue what they want to do with their lives.

But they won't admit this to anyone in public. Of course not!

Because in public, they've got it all figured out. And they have the big smile to prove it, the Brag Post on LinkedIn announcing their new job, the happy parents who can show off to their friends how "successful" their child is doing, the jealous classmates.

But don't believe the hype. Because underneath the bravado is a scared person who's faking it and hoping to make it.

So rest assured, young professional, that you aren't alone. You're not an imposter. You're just a confused, scared, vulnerable human being who's learning to make their way in the world. Ain't nothing wrong with that.

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