How to Hire
Good Engineers

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Airplanes and Ping Pong

1. What is the volume of the airplane?
2. Should packaging be a concern?
3. How big are the ping-pong balls?
4. Are they hollow?
5. Do I have to concern myself with crushing them?
6. Does the door need to close?
7. Does this include the cargo hold?

Answers

1. "The size of a standard 747."
2. "Maybe."
3. "Standard ping pong ball size."
4. "Maybe."
5. "What if you did?"
6. "Does it make a difference?"
7. "Maybe."

"How do you think?"

Engineers...

Repetitive
Mathematician
Linguist
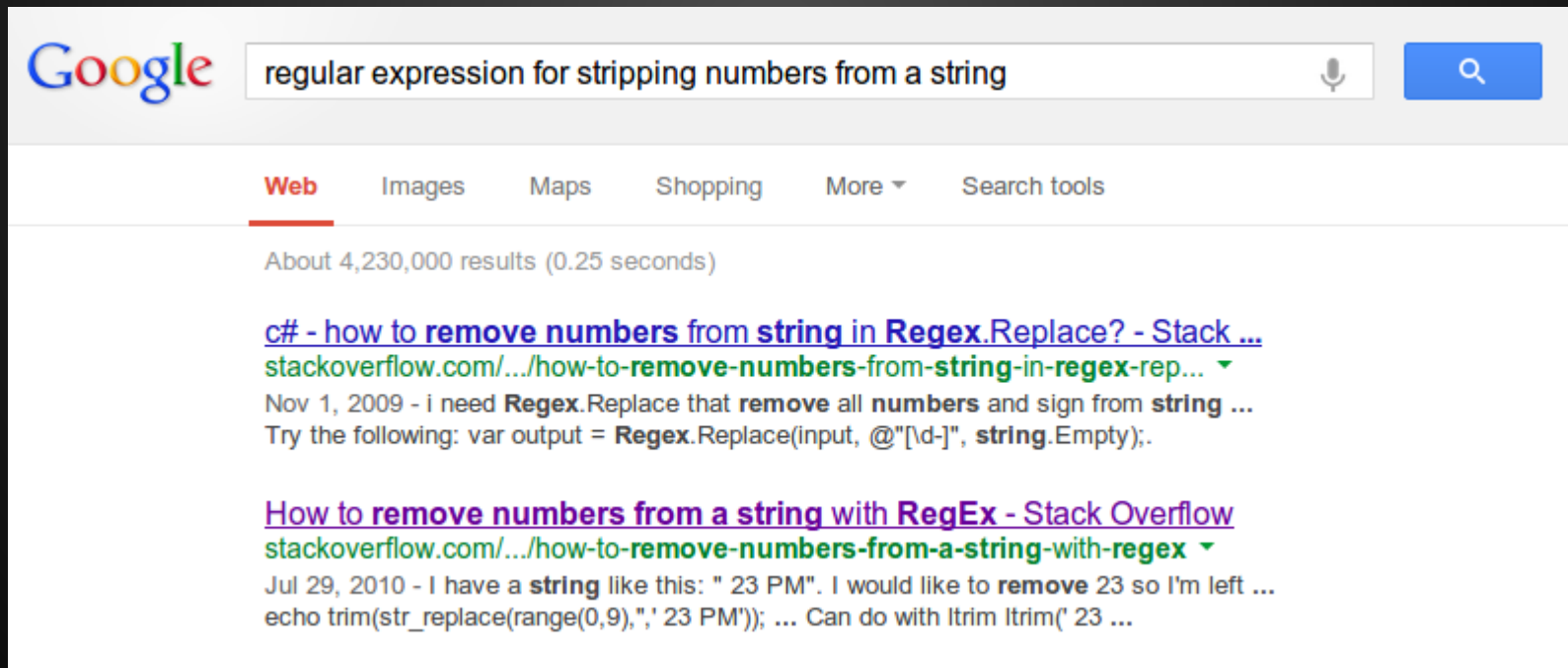Problem-solver
Hyper-focused

Management
Short cuts
Scientist
Minimalist
Polymath

Solutions in Code

#1: No Memorization

"Never commit to anything that can be easily looked up in a book."

#2: No Unbounded Puzzles

Algorithms need variables

Programmers find solutions

747-8 Freighter Fun Facts

General

▶ 747-8 Freighter could hold approximately 19 million ping-pong balls or golf balls.

#3: No Degree Hysteria

Q. *Other insights from the studies you've already done?*

A. On the hiring side, we found that brainteasers are a complete waste of time. How many golf balls can you fit into an airplane? How many gas stations in Manhattan? A complete waste of time. They don't predict anything. They serve primarily to make the interviewer feel smart.

Instead, what works well are structured behavioral interviews, where you have a consistent rubric for how you assess people, rather than having each interviewer just make stuff up.

Q. *Other insights from the data you've gathered about Google employees?*

A. One of the things we've seen from all our data crunching is that G.P.A.'s are worthless as a criteria for hiring, and test scores are worthless — no correlation at all except for brand-new college grads, where there's a slight correlation. Google famously used to ask everyone for a transcript and G.P.A.'s and test scores, but we don't anymore, unless you're just a few years out of school. We found that they don't predict anything.

Q. *Can you elaborate a bit more on the lack of correlation?*

A. After two or three years, your ability to perform at Google is completely unrelated to how you performed when you were in school, because the skills you required in college are very different. You're also fundamentally a different person. You learn and grow, you think about things differently.

#4: No Marathons

Personalize

Be human

Be interesting

#1: Be Conversational

Past projects

Personal passions

Why?

#2: Make Them Code

No whiteboards

No micromanagement

Mimic real-world conditions

#3: Forget References

Portfolio matters most

Ask for details (again: *why?*)

Artists love to talk art

#4: Let Go

No one is perfect

Tech titans are a rarity

Rough guidelines,
not requirements

Hire Right, Be Happy