Speaker 2

And great. So now you're recording it. Can you tell me what is your current position, your official position in your job?

Speaker 1

Yeah, my official position is called senior front end engineer.

Speaker 2

Yes.

Speaker 1

A front end developer.

Speaker 2

OK, good. And how many years of experience do you have in this current position of yours?

Speaker 1

Well, at least six years. But before that, I was just a front end developer without senior title, so you can consider it.

Speaker 2

11 years of experience as a front end developer, yeah. Good, good. And what do you basically do on a daily basis? What are a few examples of daily activities you have in your position?

Speaker 1

Well, usually my daily activities consist of planning future work, collaborating with my teammates on current work or planning new features. Writing code, obviously. I'm mostly working on the Angular part of the application. Then I also write tests for everything I build, and then I have to maintain tools our team uses. I mean bespoke tools, our test harness, and so on. I guess that's about it.

Speaker 2

Great. Great. Thanks a lot.

Speaker 1

Software development.

Speaker 2

Yes, yes, that's great. So you develop stuff, you test stuff, you maintain stuff. The regular software development activities. Nice, that's great. OK, good. Since you had the chance to use the bot before the interview, we're going to skip the bot usage part of the interview. For people who don't have the opportunity to use the bot beforehand, I would make a few minutes available for that. But since you had the chance to use it, we can go directly to the evaluation.

Speaker 2

The first question I have for you is: do you have any questions about the bot? What was your overall perception about using it?

Speaker 1

Yeah, well, I wasn't sure who this bot is targeted for. I mean, I saw that you probably designed it for people who work in large teams, and maybe they have a bottleneck when they have to assign labels. But that sounds like quite a narrow use case. To be honest, that's not something I encountered during my work. However, we don't use GitHub issues, we use JIRA, but we have similar pieces of functionality there, and this has never been a problem.

Speaker 2

But do you use labels in JIRA to classify the issues somehow?

Speaker 1

Well, the labels in JIRA work slightly differently, at least in our installation. For example, in GitHub you have to author labels and assign them, and you can make it work in whatever manner you would like. In JIRA, usually, at least in companies that I worked for, tasks have categories. Like this is a code change, this is some sort of task that doesn't output any code, or like doing research, leaving some notes and that's it. So this kind of classification, and obviously the tags where you can assign hashtags to tasks and then filter by them to group similar features for ease of use. So that's the kind of system I'm more used to.

Speaker 2

OK. And these labels you’re mentioning, people are responsible for adding them to the issues, right? It's not an automated feature, it's something manual.

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. People are responsible for adding them, but these are not the pivoting point in our flow. So if some tasks don't have any labels, it's alright. You can always check the description. It's a quality-of-life feature, and most people don’t even use these kinds of labels.

Speaker 2

OK, I see. Because the whole point, the idea with the bot, would be to automatically add this label “technical debt.” How aware are you about this term “technical debt,” the concept?

Speaker 1

I don't like this term because different people usually mean different things when they mention technical debt, and I prefer not to use it at all.

Speaker 2

OK, definitely. But do you see any usefulness in adding labels automatically? Or do you think adding labels—well, the question is, do you see any value in adding labels automatically, if there was a tool for doing that? What’s your perception of this automated labeling?

Speaker 1

Well, it depends who this is important for. Usually development teams have different roles, and for some people it doesn't matter what's in the label. They just assign stuff to do and don't bother with it. Some people have to manage the tasks. For example, I usually manage, in some manner, what my smaller team will work on in a week or two, and these labels help, but they aren’t that important in the end. This is classification baked into the software. With the dawn of AI-based tools, I guess you want me to classify things by feature, so in the future the search will be able to find more precisely what we're looking for. So I guess for management kinds of positions this might be useful. But the amount of tasks they'd have to classify has to be quite high, because it doesn't take much effort to classify a task and this doesn't have to be done so often, at least in my team. So I can see where in big companies, big teams with a lot of things to do, this might be the case. But this is not something I've encountered in my professional life.

Speaker 2

Indeed, indeed. Definitely makes sense. Moving to the other feature of the bot: do you see value in receiving notifications about labels or any other information within the issue? What is your perception about receiving notifications?

Speaker 1

Yeah, well, this sounds like a curious place to hook into if you want to check certain kinds of issues. For example, failing tests in CI. My front end team is responsible for keeping tests green, and we have labels that signify these. When other team members, for example a manager or QA, find a flaky test, they usually create a task and assign the label. But there is no way for me to know unless they tell me. If some automated system would notify me, or if I’d be able to subscribe to the stream, it might be useful. But you have to think hard about the use cases for this. So I guess it's a useful tool to have, but I don't envision most of my teammates using it. For example, I suspect if it's something more important or urgent, we'll talk about it anyway, or a manager will notify you. So it depends on the team structure and what sort of work we're doing.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 1

Maybe in large open source projects, which are short on hands, this might be of use. But again, that’s not the kind of project I usually work on.

Speaker 2

And how big is your team now?

Speaker 1

Well, my team ranges from about 10 to 15 people. It's quite flexible, different situations happen which affect the team size.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 1

Yeah, it wasn’t more than 20 people at most.

Speaker 2

And do you consider this amount of people as a small team, medium size, or how?

Speaker 1

Oh well, I'm not sure these are the correct terms to talk about teams. I mean, a single person can manage only so many people. 10 people sounds like a bit too much for a single person to manage, and you'd naturally hit the limits. Instead of a team of 20-30, you'd have three teams of 10, and so on.

Speaker 2

OK. No, it makes sense. It's just to clarify because it's important for us to understand the context in which the bot might be helpful, and maybe the size of the team is one of the factors that impact usefulness.

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. You have to assign tasks and have lots of teams working on the same product. Whoever creates the task might not know who the task is for. I mean, it depends on the number of people working on the same piece of software, not just the size of the team. In this case, it might be a useful tool to help teams discover tasks their team is responsible for.

Speaker 2

Yes, yes, definitely. And still on the notification side, do you think in the context where we have more people to assign a task, this kind of notification would be helpful—for example, for a person to find a task quicker or to reduce the load of who is assigning the task? Do you see value in this direction?

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. You wouldn’t have to read descriptions, read comments, and so on. I definitely see this as a useful feature when initially sorting out new tasks. Yes.