How to assess startup job opportunities*

*crowdsourced 😉

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Working for a startup can be **empowering and rewarding**. It can also go very wrong, very fast.

I reached out to my contacts to discover **how to assess such opportunities.**

Here are the top tips...

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Try to read **between the lines** of the job description. Watch out for vague or open-ended role responsibilities.

Be warned by any language that **normalises overworking**. *Startup* does not equal *unhealthy work/life balance*.

Product Manager
SERIES A STARTUP

Look into the **past experiences of leadership**. In small organisations, these individuals are very influential on your day.

Check their previous roles to understand whether **decision-making** is likely to be led by revenue, product or tech.

Chief Technology Officer

PRIVATELY FUNDED STARTUP

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I always love asking for information about **key performance indicators.**

You can quickly understand the maturity of a startup by checking **whether employees are able to clearly articulate** personal, team and company-wide success metrics.

Head of Customer Success
PRIVATELY ACQUIRED SCALE-UP

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Find **social proof.** Check employee review sites (like Glassdoor & Blind) but also look at customer reviews. Ignore outliers but review **consistent red flags and employer responses**.

Use your network to **get a second opinion**.

Founder
SERIES A STARTUP

> Don't sacrifice salary for stocks! Think of stocks as a nice bonus, which **may or may not pay-off.**
>
> If equity is offered, **seek details**. Are they share options or an ESOP? What is the vesting period? What is the current valuation? Etc.

Commercial Director
SERIES B STARTUP

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Pay attention to how the recruitment process **makes you feel.**

Listen to your gut to pick up on subtle cues that may not be immediately obvious. This will help you to make more **authentic and rewarding decisions.**

VP People
SERIES B STARTUP

Interrogate the job description.

Check founders, funding, reputation and runway.

Assess the maturity of the startup.

Do not sacrifice your salary expectations.

Trust your instincts; they are probably right.

Hey, I'm Colin Cooper 👋

With 15+ years of delivering digital products, I specialise in coaching startup product teams.

My method boosts confidence, productivity, and creates continuous improvement.

Ready to step up?

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