



How I Landed 10+ Big Tech Interviews Without Applying?



Eugene Segal

Product Leader

WARNING!
‘UNCONVENTIONAL’
TACTICS

Canva | Head of Product



Robert Kawalsky · 6:14 AM

Hi Eugene,

Thanks for reaching out. I'd be happy to chat. If you'd like to email me at [REDACTED] we can arrange a time.

cheers,

Rob

Notion | CPO



Madhu Muthukumar (He/Him) · 10:41 PM

Hey Eugene,

Nice to meet you — I'd love to chat more, the role is much wider than what's written (we need to update it) and we can chat more about scope!

apply at notion.so/careers, and give me an email address so I can intro you to folks here :)

WiX | Co-Founder / VP Product



David Schwartz · 3:33 AM

Hi, Eugene

Very interesting. Can u email me at [REDACTED]?

Maybe we can schedule a short chat?

asana | Head of Product



Katie Guzman · 5:25 PM

Fantastic! What's your email? I'll send over an invite and zoom link

gusto | VP Product / GM



Ingrid Bernaudin (Duquénay) (She/Her) · 11:51 PM

Hey Eugene,

Thnaks for reaching out. Would

Love to chat.

Can you send me an email at [REDACTED]?

DocuSign | CPO



jerome levadoux · 7:15 AM

Hi Eugene, happy to chat. Can you send me a direct email at [REDACTED]?

Thanks

grammarly | Head of Product / CEO



Rahul Roy-Chowdhury · 5:40 PM

Eugene, thank you for reaching out, I will look into this.

Could you ping me at [REDACTED]?

Thanks!

7WISE | CPO



Nilan Peiris · 11:13 PM

Hey eugene

drop em an email at [REDACTED]

with your CV

GONG | Co-Founder / CPO



Eilon Reshef · 6:19 PM

Hi Eugene,

Thanks for thinking of us and sorry for missing your previous message.

Happy to chat. We are not actively looking for PLG leadership (partially because most of our motion is top-down). But then, happy to get to know each other and see where this leads.

databricks | Product Executive



Steve Mahoney (He/Him) · 2:54 AM

I do love a direct approach!



Steve Mahoney (He/Him) · 2:55 AM

I will pass along your information to the recruiting team and I could see who the hiring manager is. Give me a bit to figure that out

box | CPO



Diego Dugatkin · 7:09 PM

Hi Eugene, great. Let's shift to email, to loop in my EA to confirm meeting times etc.

Can you please email me to [REDACTED]?

Thanks,

Diego

Thumbtack | CPO



P.J. Linarducci (He/Him) · 9:37 PM

Thanks for reaching out. Let's explore it!

If you can share your email, I can connect you with the team to guide you through the process.

3.

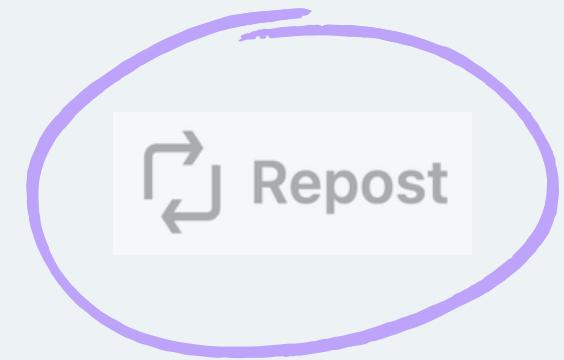
SCOPE

1. This guide will help you get your foot in the door of your chosen company. Let's call it **FITD** ('Foot In The Door').

2. FITD is what we are optimizing for!

It's the success rate from reaching out to booking the first interview.

3. I observed a more than **50% increase in FITD** when using my method compared to applying for a vacancy through the company's career page.

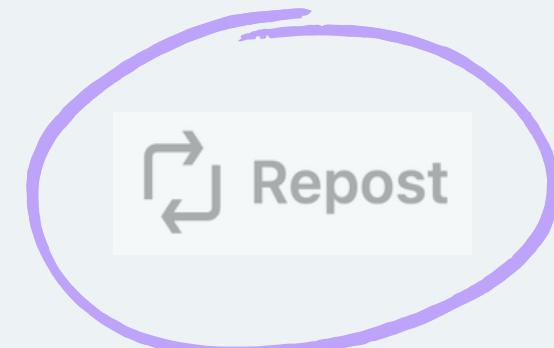


SCOPE

4. Using my own method, I landed interviews at **10+ big-tech giants** for Group, Director, and Head of Product **Leadership roles**. Here are some of the names: Asana, Canva, Notion, Grammarly, GitLab, Gong, Gusto, Box, Databricks, DocuSign.

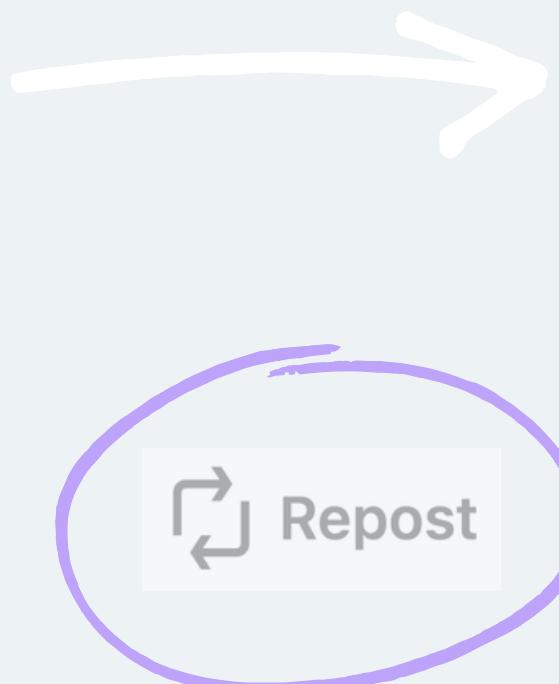


5. Be aware that this guide will NOT help you evaluate opportunities – find the best employer/role OR go the distance – smooth sail through the interview rounds. I will talk about those topics in my following guides.



SHORT VOCABULARY

1. I will use the term '**Recruiters**' to describe: (Technology) Recruiters, Recruitment Coordinators, Talent Acquisition, Headhunters, Sourcing specialists, Executive Search Consultants, etc.
2. I will use the term '**Product Leaders**' to describe: Group Product, Director of Product, Head of Product, VP Product, CPO, etc.
3. '**Applying Online**' means applying for a vacancy through the company's career page (the usual boring way).





BEFORE WE START!

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ME:

1. The first six years of my corporate PM career were a **WASTE**. I worked at software factory startups. Those that refer to people as resources.

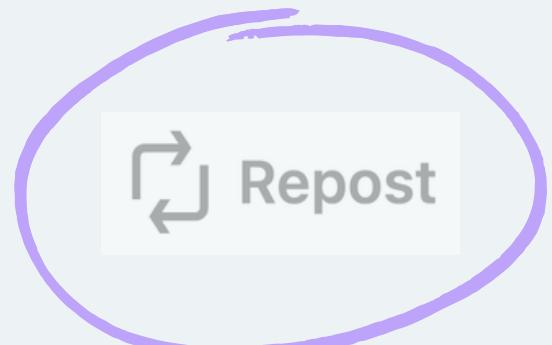
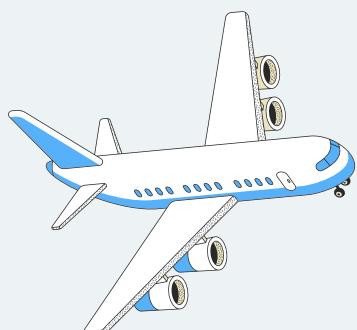


2. My family immigrated from **Ukraine** when I was 8 y/o.

3. I shared a room with my grandfather until the age of 18.

4. The first time I went to a proper restaurant was during my college years.

5. The first time I abroad was at age 23. And since then, I have never stopped.



7.

6. Nothing came easy to me in life. No money, connections, nothing besides the HIGH expectations of my parents. I am not a prodigy; far away from it. I don't have an exceptional memory, and I hate public speaking. **The one thing I do really well is making real connections with people.**

7. It took me **moving continents**, chasing a job, and finding a mentor who believed in me to change my life paradigm.

8. My biggest lesson, and what is deeply embedded now in my DNA, is that **Norms, Systems, and Rules are there to be challenged.** You MUST **think differently** and be bold.



9. Today and one IPO later, I am building rockstar product teams at a 17.5 billion USD unicorn.

10. I also learned that what I LOVE the most (more than building products), is **giving PMs superpowers to manage and grow their careers using my 'unconventional' tactics.**

MY METHOD IN ONE SENTENCE!

I FIND OUT WHO IS THE HIRING MANAGER FOR THE ROLE, REACH OUT DIRECTLY, AND BUILD EMPATHY.

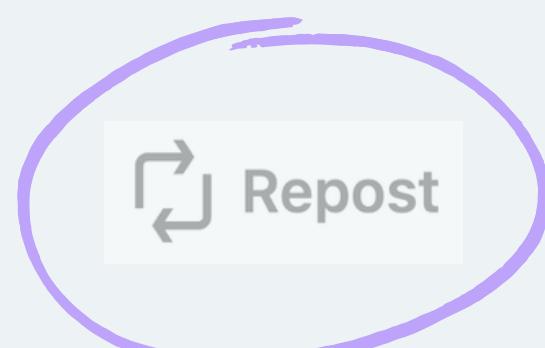
It's a bit of a simplification of course.

BTW – You will find the message template I use when reaching out to the Hiring Manager later in the guide.

Steal it! 

Or, better, learn why this template works and build infinite templates of your own. 

Before we break down the method, I want to articulate further **why Reaching out Directly to the Hiring Manager is more valuable than Applying Online.**



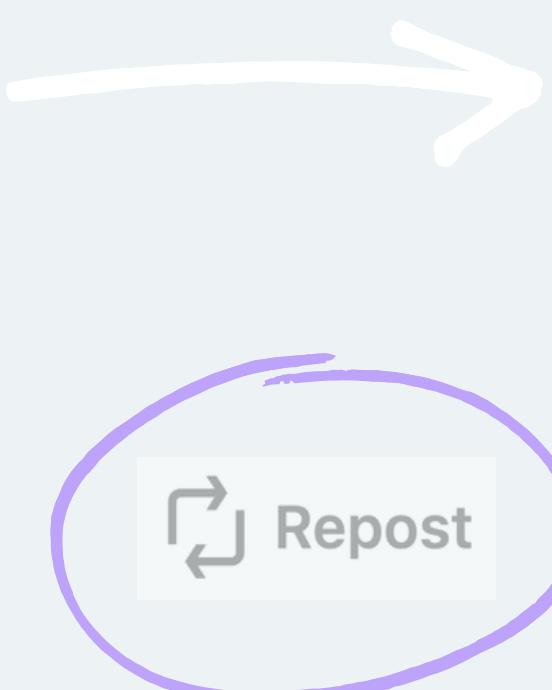
FACTS

Looking at the 10 big tech giants at which I ended up securing an interview.

At each of those companies,
I both 'Applied Online' and 'Reached out directly to the Hiring Manager'.

At more than 5 of those companies, I got a rejection email after Applying Online. I was not selected for the first round of interviews.

The Hiring Managers (after I reached out to them) had to override the recruiters' decision. Yes, you heard me correctly! Let's dig next into why this happened.



WHY DOES APPLYING ONLINE SUCK?

1. THE MASSES EFFECT

Competitive Product roles have 1000+ applicants. When applying online, your application will be reviewed as one of many. 

Based on my observations, less than **1% of applicants reach out directly to a Hiring Manager.** Building a relationship with the Hiring Manager early in the recruitment process will no doubt strengthen your application. You will skip the recruiters' resume screening round and might benefit from the Hiring Manager being your internal advocate for the rest of the recruitment process.

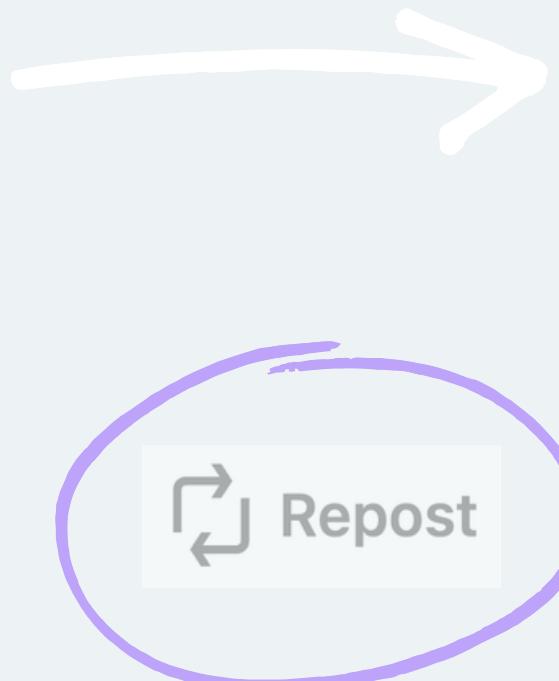


WHY DOES APPLYING ONLINE SUCK?

2. THE EVIL ATS

99% of Fortune 500 companies use ATS (Applicant Tracking System) to scan the applicants' resumes and identify those that fit best. I don't trust bots. Side note, if you are applying online, you MUST optimize your resume for ATS; this includes customizing your resume for each role.

You skip the recruiters' resume screening round when reaching out directly, thus NO ATS!



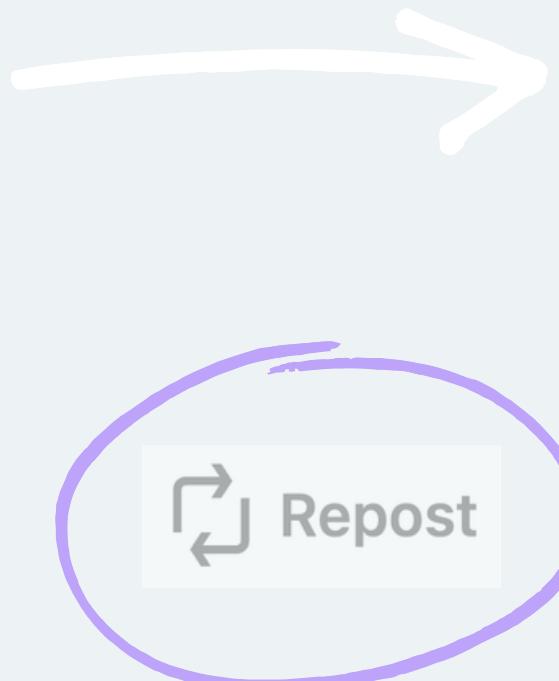
WHY DOES APPLYING ONLINE SUCK?

3. A DULL STORY

It's challenging to convey your story through a Resume or a Cover Letter (especially when it is ATS optimized). **ATS is where creativity goes to die.** 🎨

When reaching out directly, you control the narrative and the format. You share your journey, build credibility, and emphasize your fit for the role through your LinkedIn profile.

Your LinkedIn profile is a powerful (and still undervalued) engagement tool when used to its full potential.



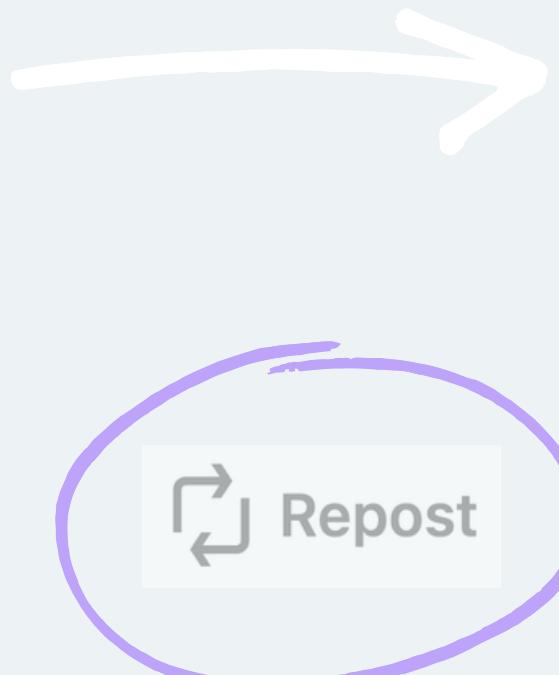
WHY DOES APPLYING ONLINE SUCK?

4. THE BUYER PERSONA

In most cases, Recruiters are less proficient than Product Leaders in evaluating product candidates' fit for Product roles. Especially when the Product Leader is the Hiring Manager for the position. Well, the Hiring Manager was the one who created the job description and, of course, has the best understanding of the ideal candidate profile. Sorry, Recruiters, some of you are indeed awesome!

Reaching out directly to the Hiring Manager means **going directly to the 'Buyer Persona' with no intermediates.**

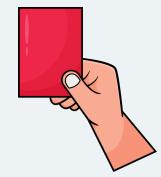
Side note, the same goes for Design, Analytics, Marketing, and Engineering functions.



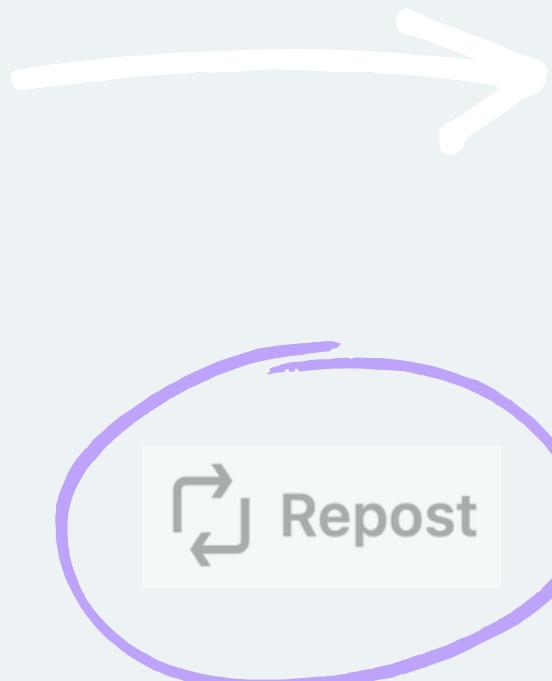
WHY DOES APPLYING ONLINE SUCK?

5. ONE-STRIKE-OUT

It's a one-strike-out game. If you got rejected on your first application, you are out for at least 12 months.



Establishing a solid connection with the Hiring Manager can help you to explore your suitability for future positions when those arise. However, exercise caution not to overvalue your relationship, as it may be less significant than you believe.



FINDING THE HIRING MANAGER.

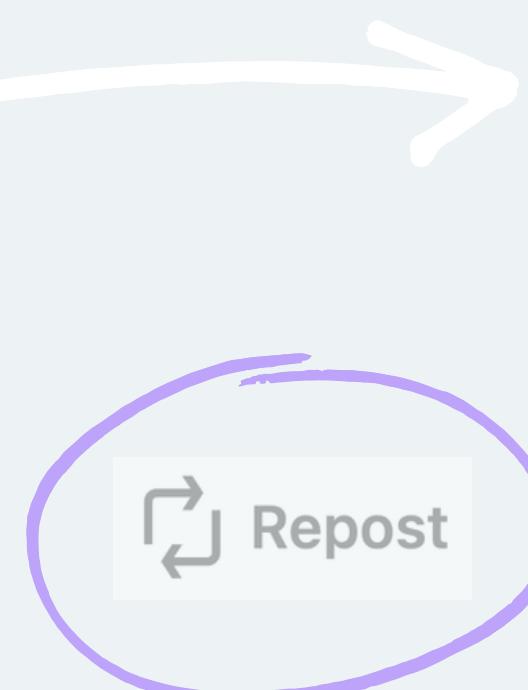
LINKEDIN 101.

- 1.** I am using **Linkedin Premium Business**, as this tier allows me to view and reach out to any profile (up to 3rd degree) with InMails. It's not cheap, though; 60 USD per month on a monthly plan and about 30% less on the annual plan.

- 2.** To find the Hiring Manager, go to Linkedin's people search. You can specify a company ('Current company') and play with the 'Title' filter ('All filters') to get only those employees with the title 'Product'.

LinkedIn search results for 'Miro' with 'Keywords' set to 'Product'. The results show four profiles:

- Rochelle Carr • 2nd
Senior Product Manager
Amsterdam
Susan van de Ven, Ksenia Apolonskaya, and 11 other mutual connections
- Peter Parkes • 2nd
Group Product Manager at Miro
Netherlands
Talks about #saas, #productivity, #productmanagement, and #softwaredevelopment
2K followers • Alan Lim, Turochas "T" Fuad, and 97 other mutual connections
- Fabian Pühringer • 2nd
Product @ Miro
Amsterdam
Varun Parmar, Nakul Jamadagni, and 23 other mutual connections
- Christopher Parker • 2nd
Product Manager at Miro | Ex-Atlassian
Amsterdam
Varun Parmar, Sergey Chernov, and 46 other mutual connections



FINDING THE HIRING MANAGER.

LINKEDIN 101.

3. Sometimes, after filtering the Product folks list, it's still unclear who is the hiring manager. In those cases, **I reach out to a few Product Leaders** inquiring about who is the Hiring Manager for the position I am interested in. **You can also contact ICs** (= Individual Contributor) PMs with the same question. **Get creative!**

4. Please note that if a person is **not active** on LinkedIn (check the 'Activity' section on the profile's page), it's a leading indicator that they might be less susceptible to Engaging with you on LinkedIn.

Activity
951 followers

Lisa Castelein posted this • 1d
Join me and [Sanjana Tandon](#), [Amanda Botha](#), [Gina Dragulin](#) and [Anthony Roux](#) at [#atlassiateam23!](#)
We'll be on the exhibition floor showcasing the ways Miro supports Product Development, with [Varun P.](#) ...show more

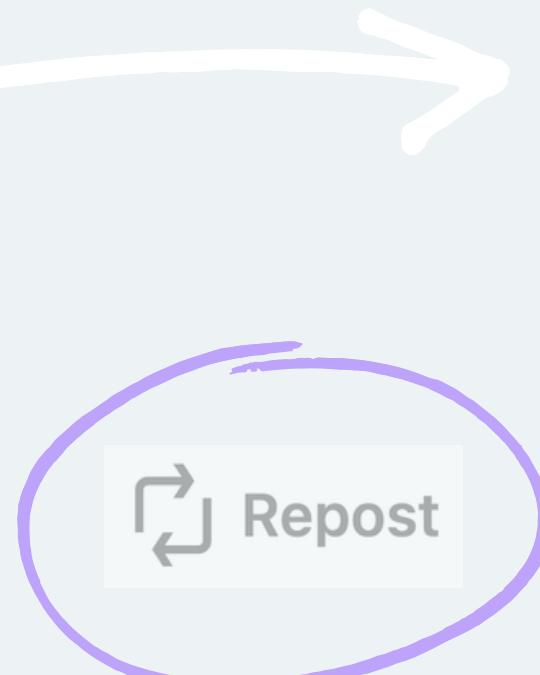
 Team '23
app.ingo.me

37 comments • 1 comment

Lisa Castelein reposted this • 3w
[Webinar: Miro for Product Development](#)
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79 comments • 2 comments • 8 reposts

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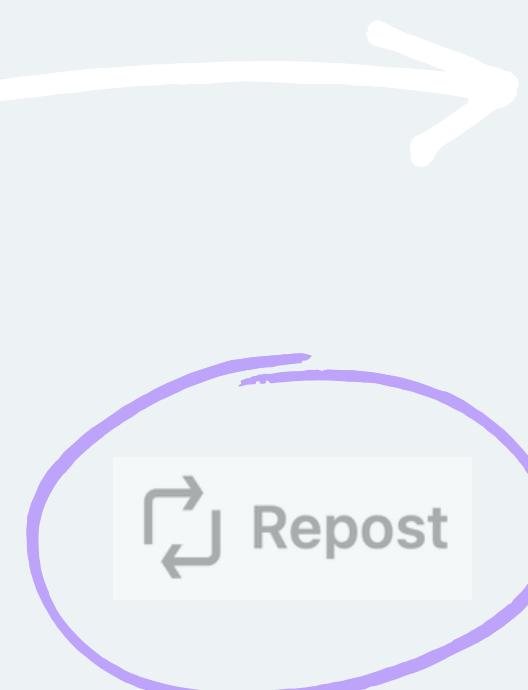
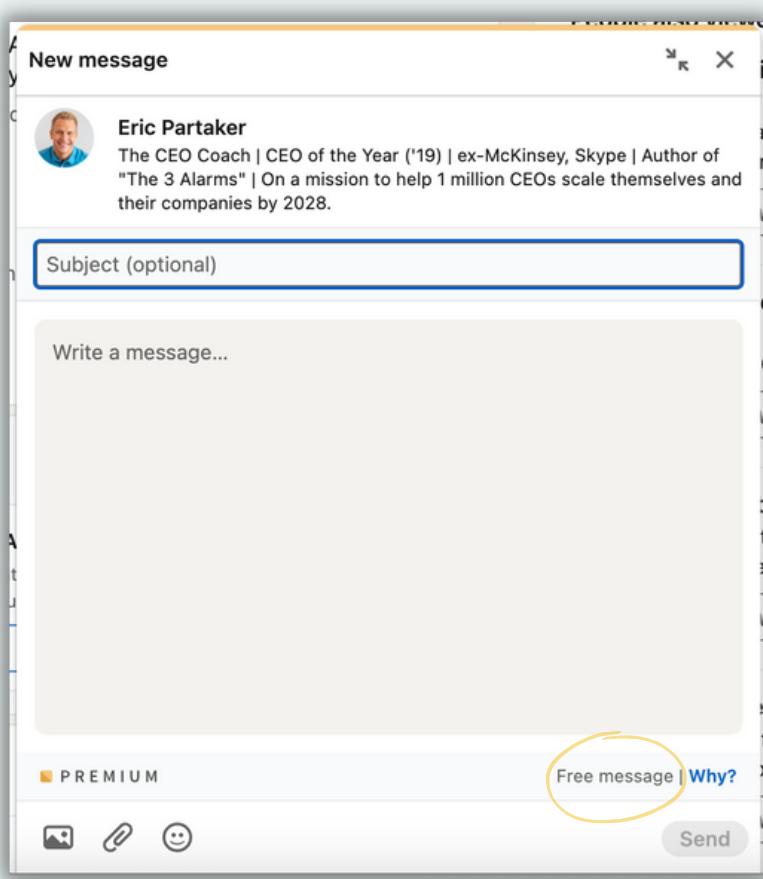


FINDING THE HIRING MANAGER.

LINKEDIN 101.

5. Reaching out with an InMail (a message to a 2nd and above degree connection) is not cheap. The number of InMail credits you get per month is limited. You need to be smart and strategic about it.

One way to reduce the cost is to convert the prospect to a 1st-degree connection before you reach out. It's free to send messages to 1st-degree connections. Make sure you send a friend request with a personalized note! In addition, if your InMail got viewed, the next one will be free.



REACH OUT TO THE HIRING MANAGER.

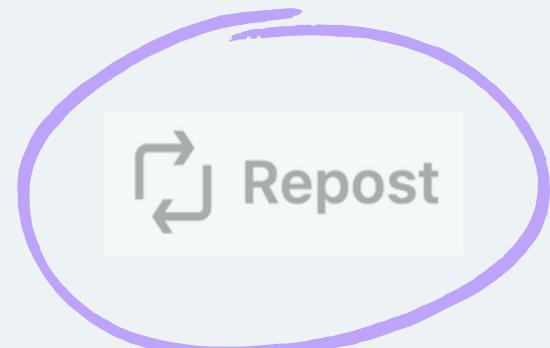


COPYWRITING 101.

In this section, I will share **the template I use** to reach out to Hiring Managers.

But more importantly, **the rationale and the principles** behind why I structured the template the way I did.

Understanding the **underlining psychology** of the message will allow you to construct your own infinite number of tramples.



THE HIRING MANAGER MESSAGE

 You found THE candidate for the Head of Growth role

Happy Monday, Tom! 

I just wanted to say that your talk on Lenny's Podcast inspired me! I especially loved your point on setting up the Activation metrics and the importance of Leading by Example. At Miro, we share similar thinking patterns.

BTW - I see that both of us spent some time in South East Asia. I loved it!

I am a Group PM at Miro. During the last two years at Miro, I hired, built, and scaled rockstar Growth Product teams. Currently, I am leading and mentoring Senior and Lead PMs from companies such as Meta, Amazon, Uber, Booking, etc.

I'm still loving my Miro journey, but also open to exploring leadership opportunities in companies that build products I am passionate about. 

From initial due diligence, this role, Asana's values, and the mission to help humanity thrive by enabling the world's teams to work together effortlessly resonate with what I am looking for in the next step of my career journey.

I would be happy to learn more about you and the role. I am up for an informal chat if you believe I can help Asana grow.

P.S. - In any case, I would love to connect, a networking geek. 

Enjoy a statistically significant week.

Eugene,  

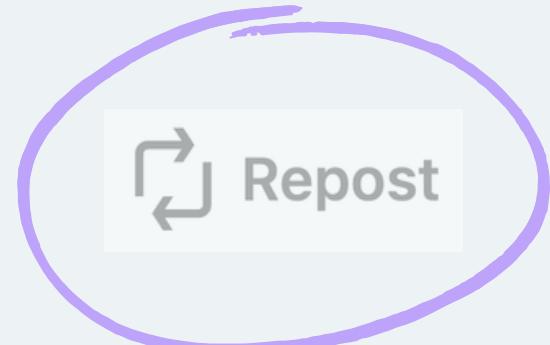


Let's break it down

BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

I will break down the message INTO eight components and provide the rationale, principles, and psychology behind each of those components.

**Meanwhile,
don't forget to Like + Repost!**

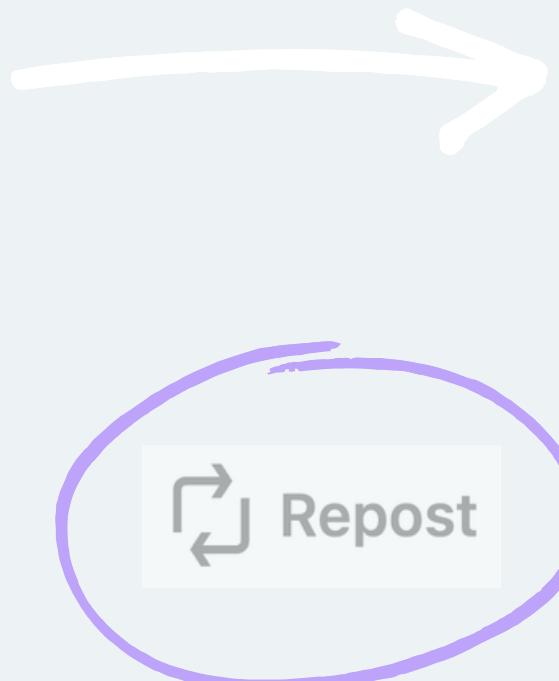


BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 1 OF 8

" **You found THE candidate for the Head of Growth role.**"

The goal of the title is to capture the attention, provide a high-level context and sufficiently excite ('Psych') the recipient to **click through and start reading your message**. The title should be original and different from those other mass InMails.

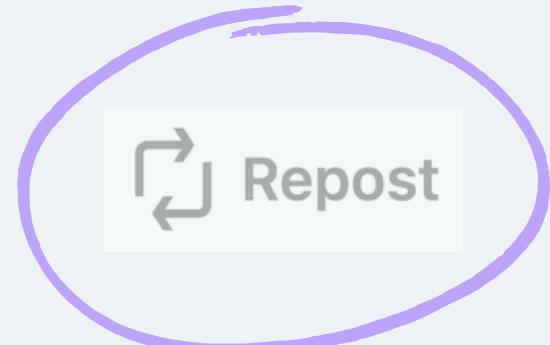


BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 2 OF 8

"Happy Monday, Tom! 🙌"

Avoid the generic 'Hello!' The first line must be **personalized and fun.**



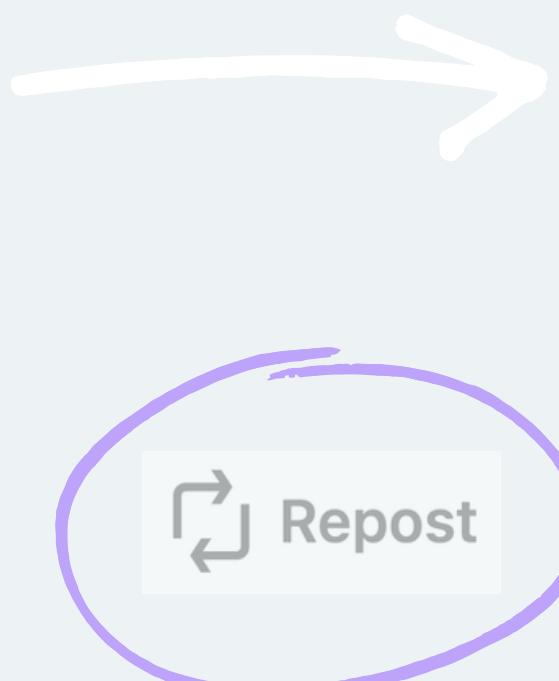
BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 3 OF 8

"I just wanted to say that your talk on Lenny's Podcast inspired me! I especially loved your point on setting up the Activation metrics and the importance of Leading by Example. At Miro, we share similar thinking patterns.

BTW - I see that both of us spent some time in South East Asia. I loved it!"

Create a personal connection by showing that you know who the person you are reaching out to is (after investing REAL time and REAL effort in learning about this person). Share your shared beliefs, values, thinking patterns, and experiences. Start building a connection.

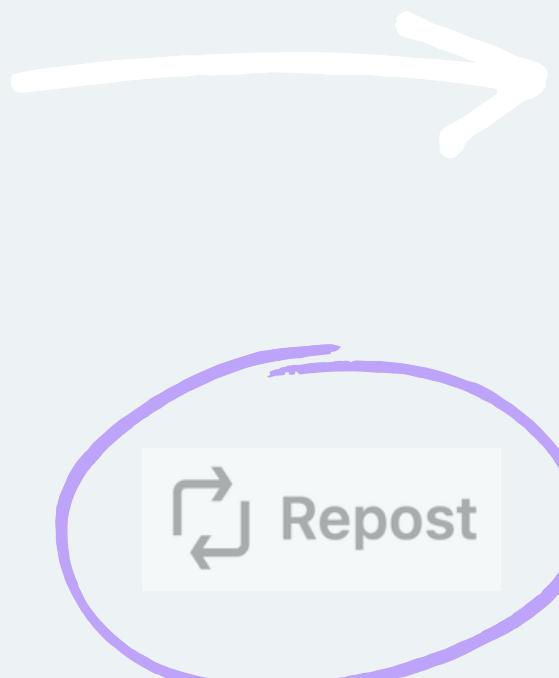


BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 4 OF 8

"I am a Group PM at Miro. During the last two years at Miro, I hired, built, and scaled rockstar Growth Product teams. Currently, I am leading and mentoring Senior and Lead PMs from companies such as Meta, Microsoft, Uber, Booking, etc. 😎"

Convey your value. You need to sell yourself! The best practice is to use social proof and quantitative data (I am not using quantitative data in this example). Moreover, connect your pitch to the job requirements. The above example would work best if it were connected to job requirements emphasizing the need to scale the product teams.

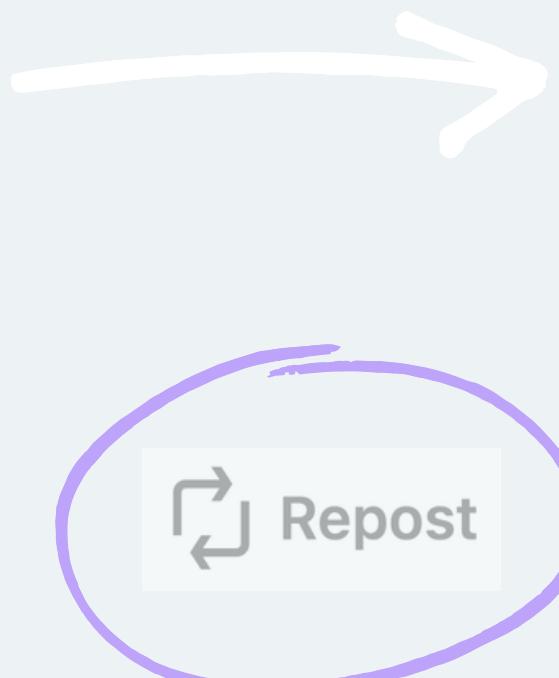


BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 5 OF 8

"I'm still loving my Miro journey, but also open to exploring leadership opportunities in companies that build products I am passionate about."

Provide context on why you are reaching out. The underline message is that you are in a place where you are evaluating the market (you are not in a rush); it's a position of power. Moreover, you indicate that you are familiar with and a fan of Asana's product. Asana wasn't a random choice.

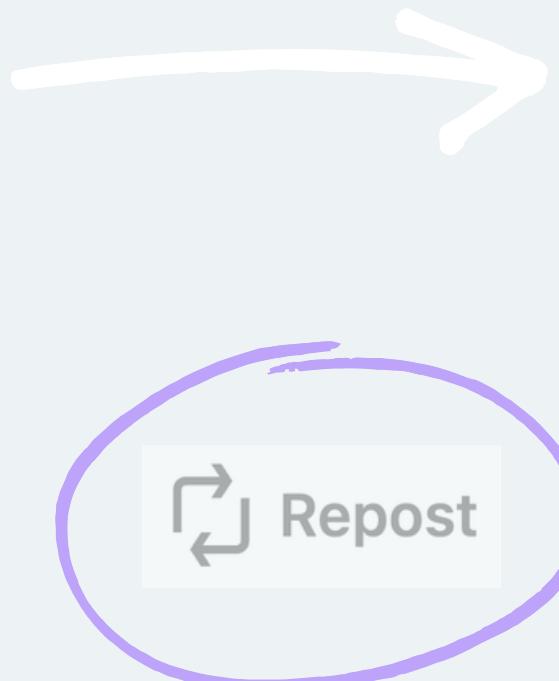


BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 6 OF 8

"From initial due diligence, this role, Asana's values, and the mission to help humanity thrive by enabling the world's teams to work together effortlessly resonate with what I am looking for in the next step of my career journey."

Continue showing that you are carefully picking your opportunities, have **high standards** for your next career bet, look beyond the job description, and care deeply about the culture and the mission. **You are not one of the 1000 other candidates!**

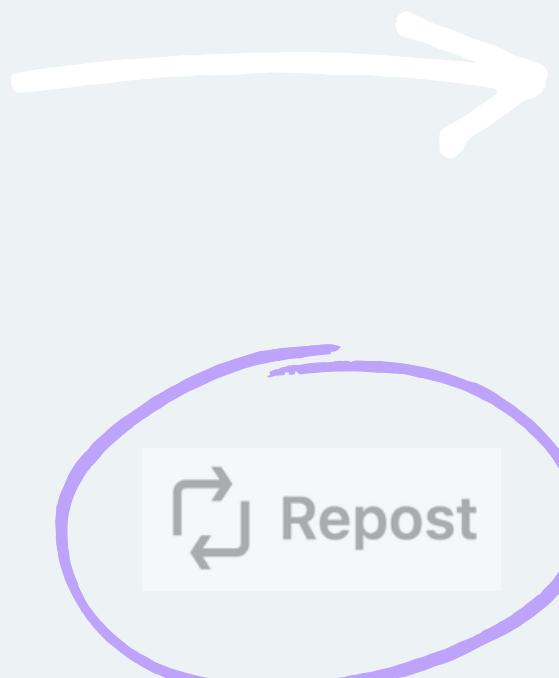


BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

PART 7 OF 8

"I would be happy to learn more about you and the role. I am up for an informal chat if you believe I can help Asana grow."

The subtle message is that **you still didn't make the final call about pursuing this opportunity**. You want to explore in an informal setting if Asana is a good fit for you. Moreover, **you want to learn how you can help the hiring manager succeed in their job**. It's a win-win.



BREAKING DOWN THE MESSAGE

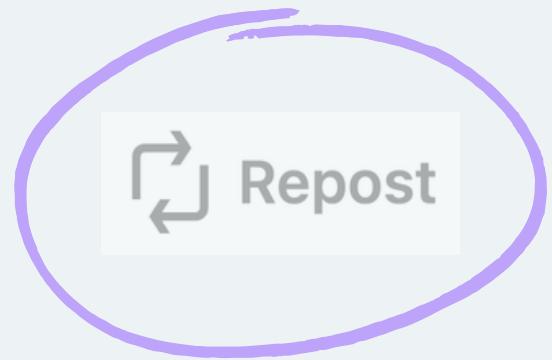
PART 8 OF 8

"P.S. - In any case, I would love to connect, a networking geek. 😊

Enjoy a statistically significant week.

Eugene, 💛💙"

Finish up with something unconventional and funny. Convey that **you are not only about business but a fun, easy-going individual, someone people enjoy working with.**



COPYWRITING PRINCIPLES:

Follow those horizontal copywriting principles to ensure your written communication is slick!

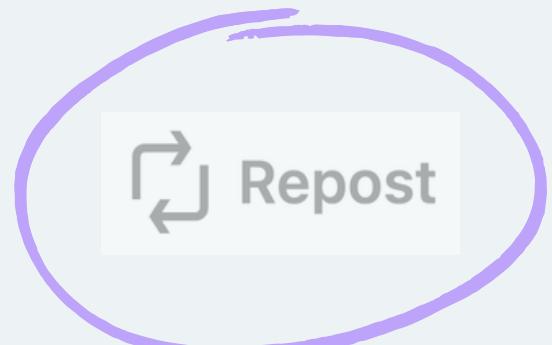
- 1.** Short sentences, short paragraphs, short messages. It should be **concise**. After you are done, go over it again and make it at least 25% less wordy.

- 2.** You should sound like a **human**, not like a 🤖, use simple language.

- 3.** Use Grammarly and QuillBot to check **grammar and spelling** and to **re-phrase**.

- 4.** **Read it out loud** before sending it. It's the best way to debug. 

- 5.** Emojis can add a fun, **emotional layer** to your writing.

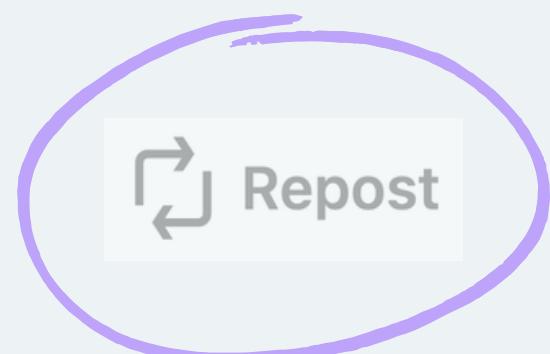


SUCCESS ENABLERS

To make sure you are driving the FITD ('Foot In The Door') up with your slick comms, there are five success enablers to account for:

1. You need to be **a decent fit for the role** you are applying for.
2. Your Linkedin profile page MUST tell your story and emphasizes your fit for the role. Think about **your Linkedin profile page as THE landing page** on which the Hiring Manager lands after reading your message. It has to convert!

Linkedin Profile Page = Landing Page

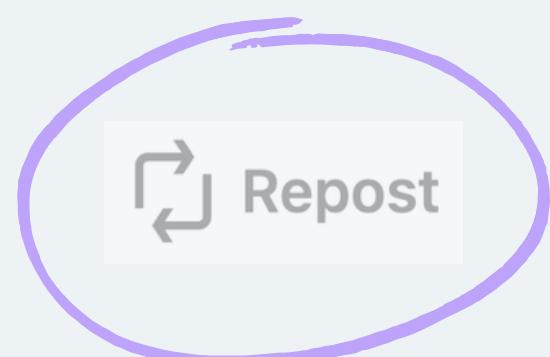


SUCCESS ENABLERS

3. Don't let the fear of the potential Hiring Manager's perception of your message impede your creative spirit. **Be bold**, try out different approaches, and learn what sticks.

4. Do your homework! Don't just fake a personal connection with the Hiring Manager. It should be real. BTW – if you couldn't find the link. Great! Don't apply for the role. You just did yourself a favor.

5. Remember, everything you do is to help you stand out from the crowd. Hence, **think differently!**

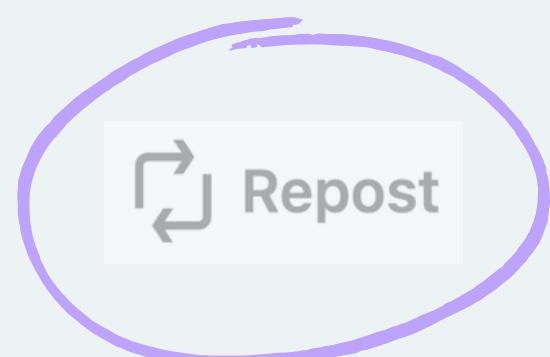


FAQ

1. The Hiring Manager ignored me. Should I apply online now?

No

Try to identify the recruiter for this role and reach out directly to them. You might skip the screening round if you kick it off with the recruiter. However, in most cases, the recruiter will ask you to apply online. Nevertheless, they are already familiar with your application, which might increase your chances of passing the screening and getting to the first interview round.

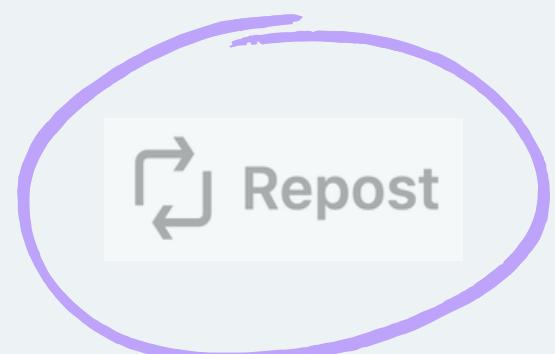


FAQ

2. The Hiring Manager and the Recruiter ignored me. Should I apply online now?

No

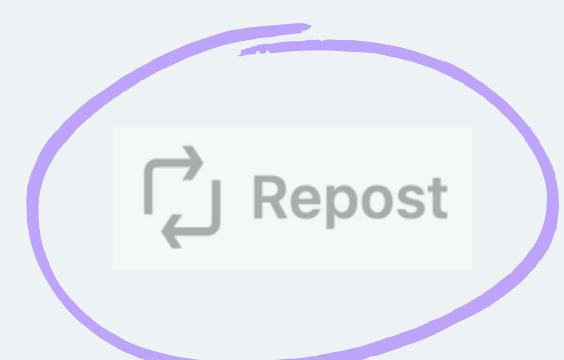
Work out a referral. Most companies have employee referral programs. Reach out directly to PMs in the target company and ask for a referral OR check out external sources such as Blind.



FAQ

3. Can you help me to sense of what to do and when? What is the order/priority?

- 💚 **Priority 1:** Reach out directly to Hiring Manager
- 💛 **Priority 2:** Reach out directly to the Recruiter
- 🧡 **Priority 3:** Apply online with a Referral
- ❤️ **Priority 4:** Apply online without a Referral (that is what 99% of the candidates do).



FAQ

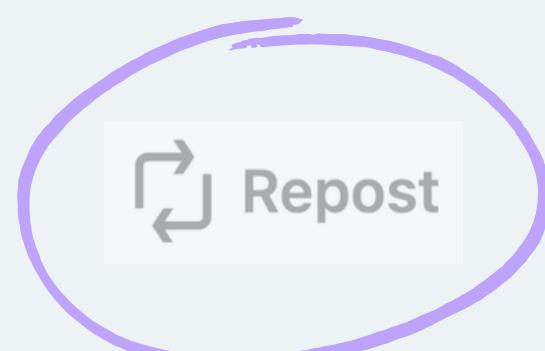
4. Do you always use the same template for all comms?

No

The template depends on multiple factors, such as what the ask is, the context, the role of the person, your previous relationship, etc. Some examples of different templates are:

- Sending a connection request
- Reaching out to PMs to find out who is the Hiring Manager
- Reaching out to Founder / CEO
- Reaching out to Recruiters
- And much more.

I will talk about those topics in my following guides. 😊

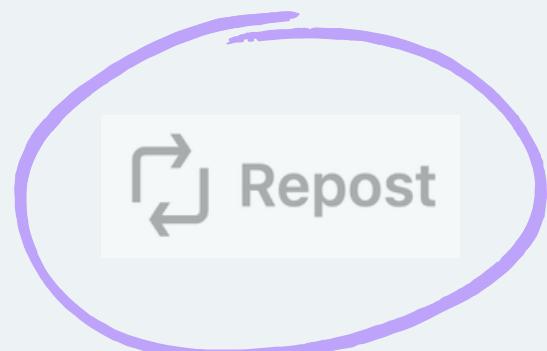


FAQ

5. Is mass applying online easier than reaching out directly to the Hiring Manager?

No

Due to the ATS, you need to customize your Resume and Cover letter per vacancy to get your Application to pass the screening round. It's pretty demanding. Applying online is a scalable method for companies but a much less favorable way for your candidacy to shine (unless you are FAANG all the way). **Don't be of 1000's applicants.**





**Repost to your
network.**

