

JOB HUNTING



Welcome to Chapter 3! So far in this course, we've taken an in-depth look at the demand for cybersecurity and the areas of expertise so that you have a foundational understanding of the field. In this chapter, we'll build on these concepts by moving on to job hunting.

Job searching can sometimes be an overwhelming process that can also feel a bit paralyzing.

To save you time and ease the stress of looking for a new position, Chapter 3 will cover the basics of networking, the job search process, applicable job titles, resume tips, common interview questions, and interview recommendations.

As promised, we're taking you on the inside track to SOC analyst success, and that includes the job search.

Networking

Word of mouth. It's a thing! A big thing, actually.

Consider this. Maybe your favorite doctor came from a friend's recommendation. Or perhaps you bought a car based on what your trusted circle said (or the latest issue of Car & Driver magazine) about that make and model. You could've even vacationed at a particular place because your cousin couldn't stop raving about it.

You see, word of mouth can have a huge influence on people.

In marketing, it's used to encourage customers to spread the good news about a brand. So let's say an organization makes a great product or provides a fantastic service. Satisfied customers will gladly tell others about it.

It's free marketing, and it pays big dividends.

With such powerful influence, word of mouth could also lead you to the perfect job. So let's put it to work for you.

Think about it. You probably know a lot of people. It's time to tap into that wealth of knowledge and discuss your career plans with others, particularly your professional connections, who can keep you up to date on the latest trends in cybersecurity.

Beyond using word of mouth to your advantage, we have a few more recommendations, too.

1. 2600.org. For an online organization of support, check out 2600.org. They have deep roots in hacker culture and offer a website, meetup space, conference, and magazine. Their name has a most fascinating story:

In the 1970s, Captain Crunch cereal offered plastic whistles in their boxes, and that whistle blew at 2600 Hz. How does that relate to hacking? Well, when a hacker blew it into a payphone (okay, it was 50 years ago), the sound allowed them to make free calls because the whistle copied the exact tone needed to make those calls.

This fun bit of trivia, along with many others, and relevant IT news can be found at 2600.

2. Def Con. Def Con is spelled with two words. You need this conference in your life! Though Def Con sounds like an 80s hair band, it's almost a rite of passage for anyone in infosec. Def Con is held each summer in Las Vegas and offers all the bells and whistles for an IT professional. There's so much to do that you won't know where to start! You simply must prioritize attending if you can make it happen.

Recruiters also show up to Def Con! In fact, we know many people who have been offered jobs on the spot at the conference. You can also volunteer at Def Con to meet people or join a Def Con group if there's one in your area. These groups meet monthly, allowing you to network with your local infosec peers and keep up with what's going on in your industry. And back to the power of word of mouth, we hope you'll pick up a job lead along the way!

3. BSides. This is another conference held in many large cities, and it also usually meets alongside Def Con in Las Vegas. BSides is growing in popularity and offers a lot of value. You can get inexpensive tickets, and like Def Con, you can volunteer in order to get up close and personal with the events and people.

4. Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP). This nonprofit foundation strives to improve the security of software. OWASP impressively touts community-led open-source software projects, hundreds of local chapters worldwide, and tens of thousands of members. Their conferences take the lead in education and training, serving as a source for developers and technologists to secure the Web--and meet like-minded people in the process.

5. Hackerspaces and Makerspaces. Honestly, what's not to love about these names? They just sound cool. And they are! Hackerspaces and Makerspaces refer to meetups in your local area, allowing you to meet

people, tinker around, pull cool knobs, and push funky buttons. Also, members often give presentations in a show-and-tell type of way, which provides you a great avenue to build and polish your presentation skills.

A word of advice: when you visit meetings like this in your area, take a pencil and notepad! I know, it feels a little old school, but everyone at the conference is there for the same reason--to meet people, play with cool things and get contact info. We promise it doesn't feel awkward or weird to write this down. In fact, most people are flattered that you'd even want their info. Take our word for it--you'll want a way to follow up with people and send your resume to share with others, and a pencil and notepad is just the ticket.

Once you have a couple of these events behind you, your network will start to grow. Word of mouth, remember! But we can't leave networking without one last recommendation--

Use those traditional job posting boards, too.

Applying for Jobs

Alright, here we go. It's almost time to look for that job. A key element before that is a polished resume--it takes time and effort, but it's a vital vehicle that will take you to your next destination in style.

All resumes have the same basic information, even if they take different forms. Let's look at each necessary section.

- **Contact Information.** This is pretty standard. You'll need the following:
 - **Full name.** If your name is difficult to pronounce, employers may find it more inviting if you include a pronunciation guide or give your nickname in parenthesis. You can also consider using Ms. or Mr. before your name.
 - **Email.** You'll want to use a professional email address on your resume. In other words, if you're still using something like fuzzybunny@aol.com or fridaynightlightsYEET@yahoo.com, it's time to update your email address service provider and your username. Keep it simple and professional, like john.doe@gmail.com or jdoe@icloud.com.
 - **Phone number.** These days, very few people have home phones, but we all likely have smartphones. Since cell phones are how most people communicate, you need to include it on your resume. Be sure your voicemail greeting is professional.
 - **Address.** 40% of employers use applicant tracking systems (ATS) to screen candidates. ATSs look for key terms, and your address is one of those. If you leave it off, you might put yourself out of the running for a job.

- **LinkedIn profile.** If you don't have one, get one. It gives an overview of you as a professional and allows you to include more information than a concise resume. Including your profile link allows you to give the hiring manager more personalized information about yourself. Polish it, customize your URL, and include it as a hyperlink in your resume contact section. Trust us on this one.
- **Summary.** This section allows the hiring manager to quickly identify your strengths to determine if you're a good fit for the role. In IT, a summary might look something like this:

Dedicated and friendly IT consultant with over six years experience in a fast-paced start-up company. Eager to offer excellent analytical skills to help XYZ Inc. grow their customer base. Recognized in previous roles for company-wide satisfaction rating (over 97%). Client satisfaction boosted by more than 35% over one quarter and client wait time reduced by 18%.

- **Education.** Any formal education and certifications need to be on your resume. If you have degrees that aren't related to technology, list them anyway. But if you have unrelated certifications, leave them off.
- **Skills:** Your skills should line up with the position you're applying for. Areas to include are technical skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, soft skills, and problem-solving skills.
- **Job Experience:** Your previous job-related experience should be included here, and if you can, connect that to the role you're applying for. Use strong action verbs like established, spearheaded, and produced. Some hiring managers recommend only going back five years or two pages, whichever comes first; use your discretion here.
- **Objective:** This is an optional section but one we recommend. An objective refers to a short, targeted statement that reveals your career direction and positions you as a candidate who fits the job. When done well, it adds value and sets you apart from the crowd of applicants. Here's an example:

Reliable and enthusiastic professional who's interested in a Security Analyst position with DEF company; able to apply analytical, technical, and innovation skills to support and guard organizations against security breaches.

Once you've polished that resume, you're ready to job search!

Job Sites and Job Titles for the Win

Alright, alright, alright!

Your resume is looking good. You're gearing up for locating that perfect job.

Now what?

First, you may find success on several job posting websites, and we definitely recommend spending some time there: Indeed, Zip Recruiter, and Glassdoor are a few places to start your search.

Next, consider a premium membership on LinkedIn, which shows the statistics for each job you apply for, sends messages to hiring managers for companies you're interested in, and reveals who's looking at your profile. If it fits in your budget, it's a no-brainer.

Finally, put Google to work for your job search, too, by setting up and configuring job alerts.

How to set up those alerts, though? You'll need the right job titles:

- Security analyst
- Information security analyst
- Security Operations Center (SOC) analyst

Ok, this calls for a moment of transparency. While the SOC might be the lowest paid of the three job titles above, to get your foot in the door, you want to consider a temporary pay cut and remember that the trajectory of salaries is steep.

After all, a security analyst position is the easiest to land because it's usually a revolving door, and these positions open frequently.

Over time, many senior security analysts make well into the six-figure range, which is just one step up from an SOC analyst. Not two or three steps away--juuust one.

So keep your eyes on the prize and be willing to sacrifice a little in the beginning. You won't regret it!

Now you've got a great resume. You've learned the proper job titles for searching, and you've been applying for jobs left and right. Let's imagine you made it to an interview--a whole new beast! Don't worry. We've got you.

Common Interview Questions

Here, we're sharing common interview questions for a junior SOC analyst, so spend some time on these to be well-prepared when it comes time for that coveted interview.

1. What is an RFC1918 address? Do you know them?
2. Define a Class A, B, or C network.
3. What are the seven phases of the cyber kill chain?
4. What is the purpose of the Mitre ATT&CK Framework?
5. What's the difference between TCP and UDP?
6. What are the ports 80, 443, 22, 23, 25, and 53?
7. What is data exfiltration? What Windows protocol is commonly used for data exfiltration?
8. Do you have a home lab? Describe it.
9. What is AWS? Explain how you've used it
10. What is a DMZ, and why is it a common target for cyberattacks?

Depending on your background, these questions may feel simple to you. But realize that 7 of 10 candidates don't know many of the answers.

That won't be you, though, because you have a chance to practice ahead of time. Be sure you know these questions and answers like the back of your hand. Or the front of your keyboard.

Though you'll need technical knowledge, that makes up just half the requirements for an SOC analyst. You'll also need to be a critical thinker and possess an acumen for problem-solving. Interviewers will often identify this by asking scenario-based questions.

Tips for a Killer Interview

To become the best applicant out of all the candidates, keep these tips in mind:

- Dress professionally. You only get one chance for a first impression! Ask about the dress code ahead of time. It makes interviewers feel more comfortable when you are dressed per company culture. Discussions tend to be more aligned with how you'd expect your day-to-day life at the company would be like.
- Bring your resume and provide a copy for each interviewer (including yourself).
- Be organized and prepared to take notes. If you can afford a portfolio, which is essentially just a case for a legal pad, carry one with you into the interview. I personally have a black and brown one to match my belt and shoes.
- Use active listening techniques during the interview. For example, allow the interviewer to finish talking before replying. Nod your head, and lean in. Use brief affirmations like "I see" or "I agree."
- Be aware of your body language.

- Walk confidently from the waiting room to the interview room.
- Make eye contact--and keep it.
- Sit up straight and avoid crossing your arms.
- Avoid signs of restlessness like tapping the table or kicking your foot back and forth.
- Prepare questions about the role, the company, and growth opportunities. There may be several interviews with different people in various positions and it is OK to reuse questions. You might get different answers. Typical questions might include, for example:
 - Is this a new position, or who was previously in this role, and what happened?
 - What are the challenges and expectations in the first 30 and 90 days?
 - What would you consider to be success in this role?
 - Does the company support their employees volunteering in local STEM programs?
 - How does this position progress in the company?
- Ask for feedback and next steps at the end of the interview.
 - To improve my interviewing skills, can you provide any positive or negative feedback? - This shows that you are invested in growing as a professional and gives insight into how the interview went.
 - What are the next steps in the interview process? - You may feel uncomfortable at first asking this question but do it. Trust me on this