

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING PLAN

Objective: Build a professional network of 50+ quality connections in the ICT industry to support my transition from student to professional.

SHORT-TERM GOALS (1-3 Months)

1. LinkedIn Profile Optimization

- Complete 100% profile with professional photo
- Showcase academic projects and technical skills
- Gather 3 recommendations from lecturers

2. Initial Connection Building

- Connect with all ICT lecturers and department staff
- Connect with 20+ classmates and peers
- Identify and connect with 10+ CPUT alumni in IT roles

3. Industry Research

- Identify top 10 target companies for entry-level positions
- Research key industry professionals in my area
- Follow 15+ companies and industry influencers

MEDIUM-TERM GOALS (3-6 Months)

1. Strategic Connections

- Connect with 15+ recruiters specializing in IT roles
- Reach out to 10+ professionals in target companies
- Join 5 relevant LinkedIn groups

2. Engagement Strategy

- Share 1 relevant industry article per week
- Comment on 2 posts from connections weekly
- Post updates about academic achievements and projects

3. Informational Interviews

- Schedule 3 informational interviews with professionals
- Prepare specific questions about career paths
- Follow up with thank you messages

LONG-TERM GOALS (6-12 Months)

1. Network Expansion

- Maintain active engagement with existing network
- Attend 2 industry events or webinars monthly
- Build relationships with hiring managers

2. Professional Presence

- Share original content related to my learning journey
- Participate in online discussions and forums
- Establish myself as an emerging IT professional

TARGET CONNECTION CATEGORIES

Academic Network:

- ICT Department lecturers and professors
- Academic advisors and department heads
- High-achieving peers and classmates

Industry Professionals:

- Recent CPUT graduates in IT roles
- Local IT company employees and managers
- Recruiters specializing in technology roles
- Professionals in target companies

Influencers & Thought Leaders:

- Local tech community leaders
- Industry bloggers and content creators
- Professional association members

ACTION PLAN

Weekly Networking Activities:

- Monday: Send 5 new connection requests with personalized messages
- Wednesday: Engage with 3 existing connections' posts
- Friday: Share 1 piece of relevant content or project update
- Sunday: Review connection requests and follow up on messages

Monthly Networking Activities:

- Attend 1 virtual networking event or webinar
- Conduct 1 informational interview
- Review and update networking goals
- Analyse LinkedIn metrics and adjust strategy

PERSONALIZED CONNECTION MESSAGE TEMPLATES

For Alumni:

"Hi I'm Thimna Gogwana, I'm a third-year ICT student at CPUT and noticed we share the same alma mater. I'm currently exploring career opportunities in [their field] and would appreciate connecting to learn from your experience."

For Industry Professionals:

"Hello I am Thimna Gowana , I'm impressed by your work in [their specialty] at [Company]. As an ICT student preparing to enter the industry, I'd value the opportunity to connect and learn from professionals like yourself."

NETWORKING SUCCESS METRICS

Quantitative Metrics:

- LinkedIn connections: 50+ quality contacts
- Profile views: 25+ per week
- Engagement rate: 5% on posts
- Informational interviews: 1-2 per month

Qualitative Metrics:

- Received career advice from 5+ professionals
- Gained insights into 3+ companies
- Built relationships with 2-3 potential mentors
- Increased confidence in professional communication

RESOURCES & TOOLS

Platforms:

- LinkedIn Premium Student (free trial)
- GitHub for technical portfolio
- CPUT Alumni database
- Local tech meetup groups

Tracking:

- LinkedIn connection spreadsheet
- Networking activity calendar
- Follow-up reminder system
- Conversation notes database