

- Flingin' bits for fun & profit

An Example Career Path in Network Engineering

Hugo Slabbert



Hello!

# I AM HUGO SLABBERT

Principal Network Engineer & Tech Lead, NetEng  
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Certified Network Nerd

You can find me @hugoslabbert

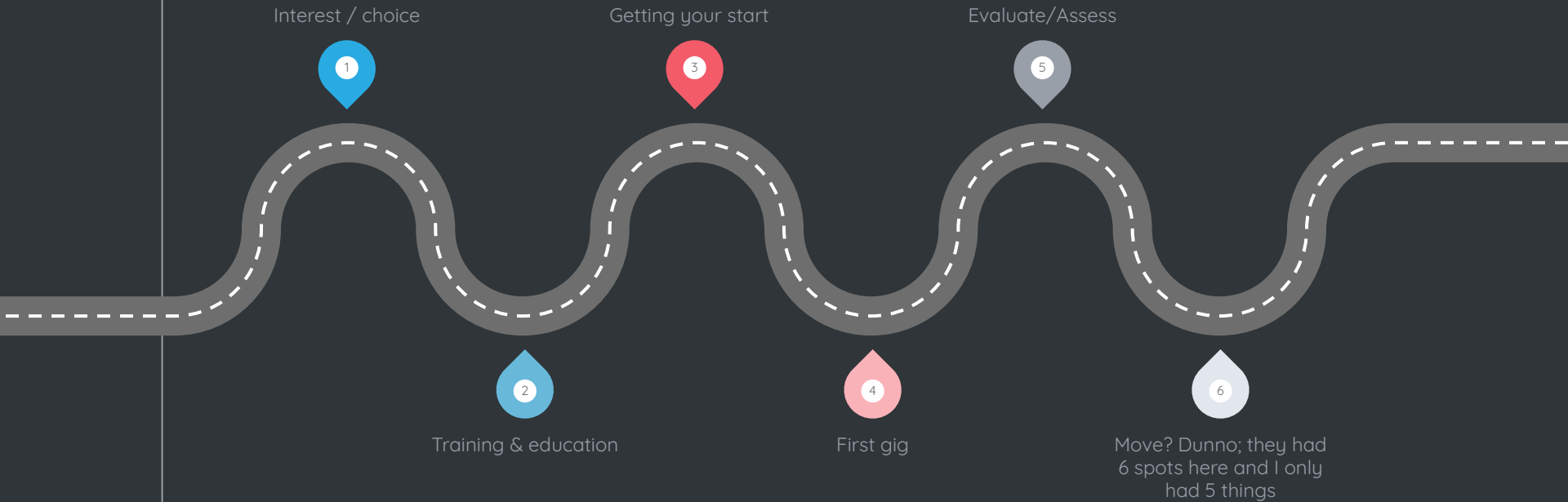


[hslabbert#2406 \(Slabby 🇨🇦\)](#)

## ● What?

- High level NetEng career path
- Some things that served me well
- "Why'd you pick it?"
- Training & education options
- Organization types for NetEng gigs
- Getting your first gig
- My example path
- "Any tips?"

- High level NetEng career path



## ● Some things that served me well



Start where you are; you don't need anyone's permission or to fit into anyone else's ideas.

"I need to get paid" is fine! Do still need an interest and put in the work.

You get out what you put in.

Prepare so you can use the opportunities when they present themselves.

Figure out what you want, then make it happen.

Take the pain away.

Community: Talk to people; build bridges; give back.

*Interest /  
choice*



Getting your start



Evaluate/Assess



Training & education



First gig



Move? Dunno; they had  
6 spots here and I only  
had 5 things

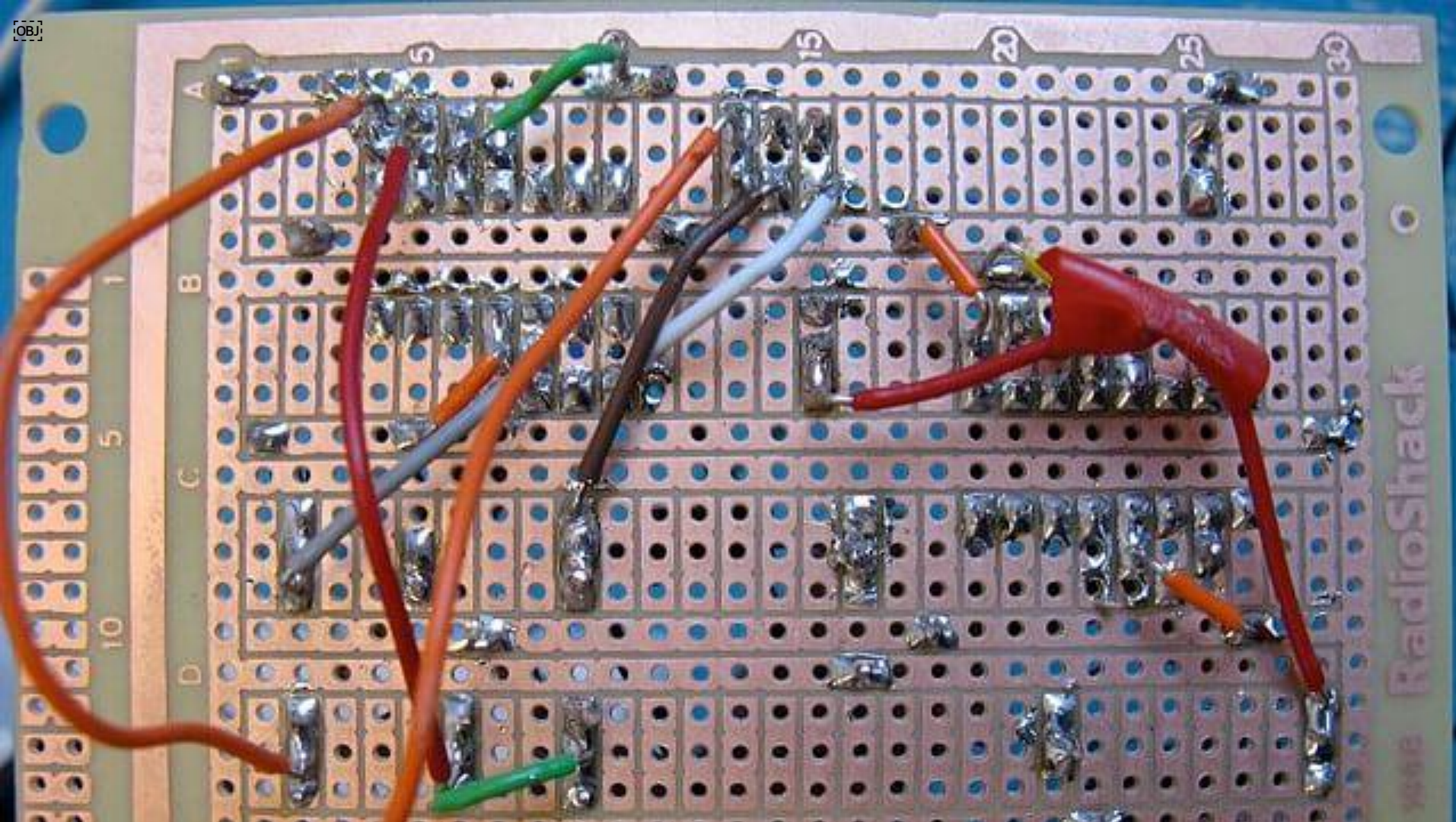












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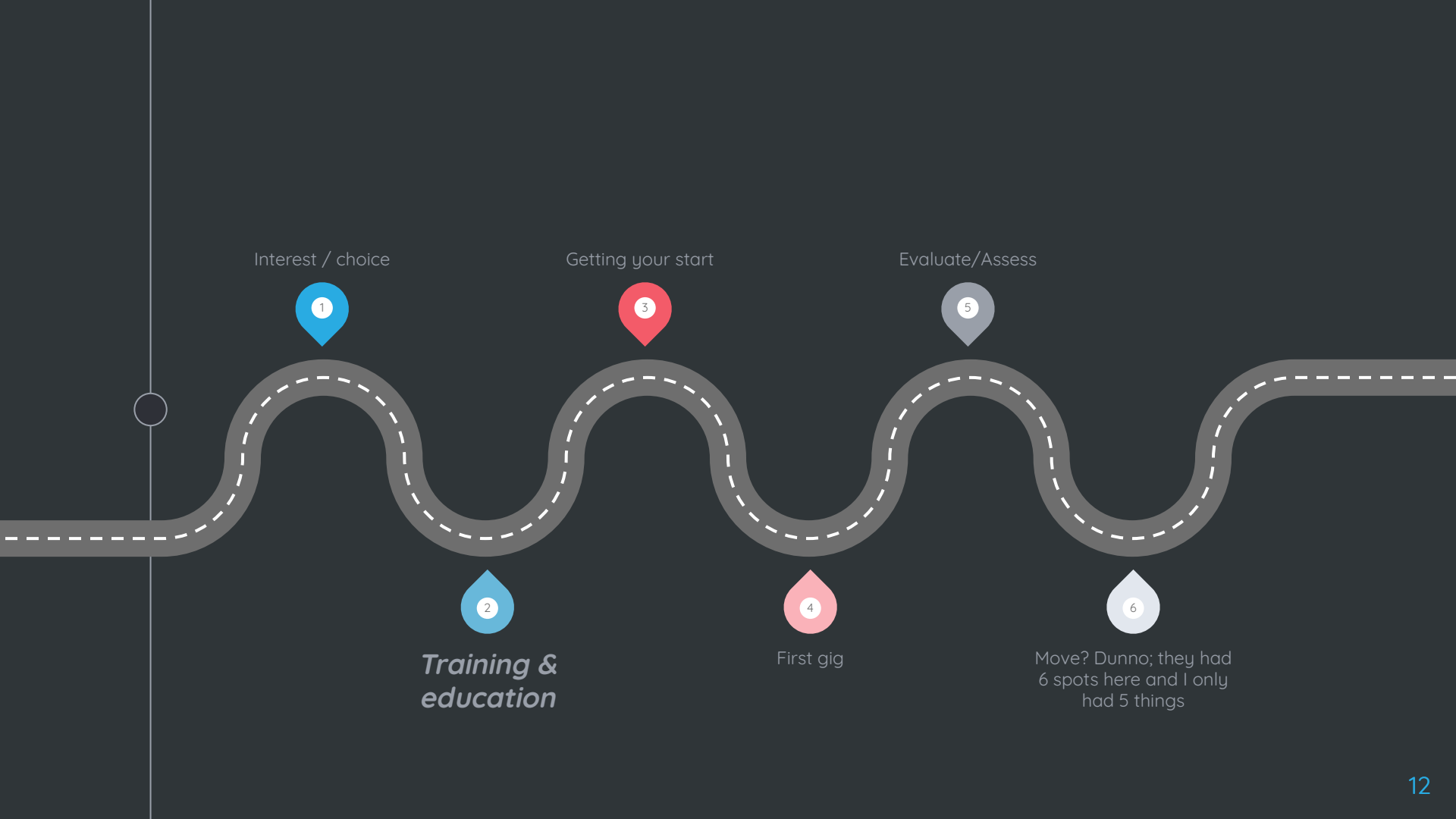
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- Training & education options

- **Formal programs**

- Guided path
- Quality and focus/relevance vary
- Can bundle certs
- Look for co-op/intern programs
- \$\$\$: Can be pricey

## Self guided

- Can be difficult to know what's relevant
- Need to set your own structure & discipline
- *Lots* of options these days ([bv]logs, CBT Nuggets / Pluralsight, etc.)
- \$: Cheaper
- Possibly more work building connections





# Network Administration and Security Professional (NASP)

Certificate / Full-time / School of Computing and Academic Studies



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## *Getting your start*

Interest / choice



Evaluate/Assess



Training & education



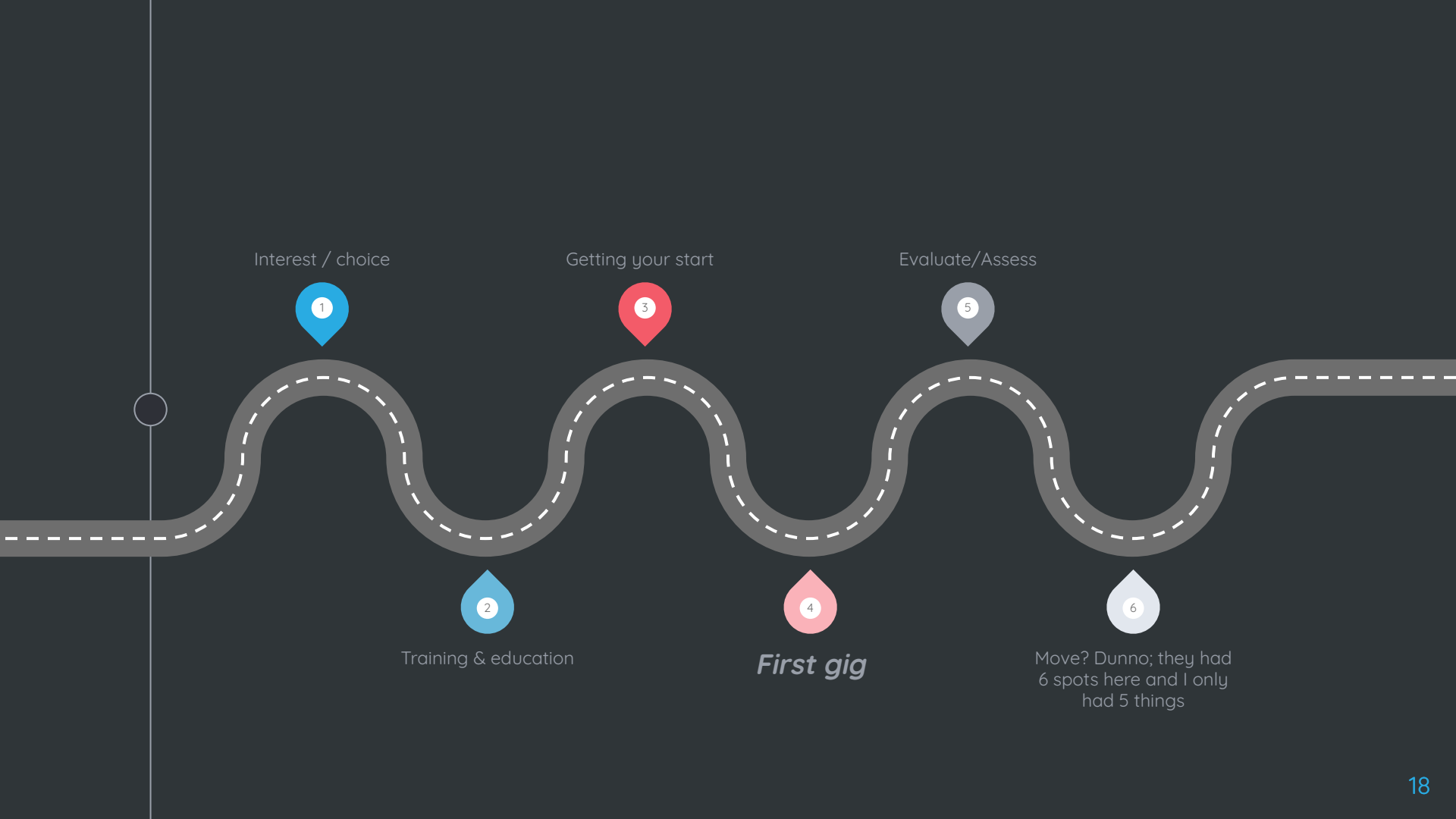
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- Organization types for NetEng gigs

- Internet or Network Service Provider (ISP/NSP)
  - Often start in NOC or help desk / support
  - Small/regional vs. Big
  - MPLS, optical, wide area transport, RIR interactions, peering/IX, etc.
  - Can be wide ranging or siloed, depending on size etc.

- Organization types for NetEng gigs

- Managed Services Provider (MSP)

- Mix of helpdesk, hosted services, managing SaaS offerings, etc.
- Can be grab bag of tech
- Quality varies: Incentives of solving problems
- Exposure to various different environments
- May not be very focused

- Organization types for NetEng gigs

## ○ Enterprise

- Less common these days
- Commonly DC + branch type env
- Tech culture varies
- More commonly "jack of all trades", covering WAN, ISP interaction, firewalling, branch connectivity, higher order services (DHCP, DNS, etc.)

- Organization types for NetEng gigs

- Network vendors

- E.g. TAC entry
- Wide range of environments
- Often mile wide inch deep interaction
- Technical depth on platforms
- Design path options
- Can be less operational & business driver/impact experience

- Organization types for NetEng gigs

## ○ Hyperscalers

- Depends which level
- High scale, tight processes can be siloed
- Can be great experience & CV material
- Great at higher levels as well: very interesting challenges to solve and generally strong tech culture with lots of support, strong automation, etc.

- Organization types for NetEng gigs

- Content shops

- Can be very exciting environments
- More frequently smaller orgs but with outsized scale or impact
- Can be quite a mix of tech/areas
- More commonly strong technical culture



- Organization types for NetEng gigs

ISP/NSP

MSP

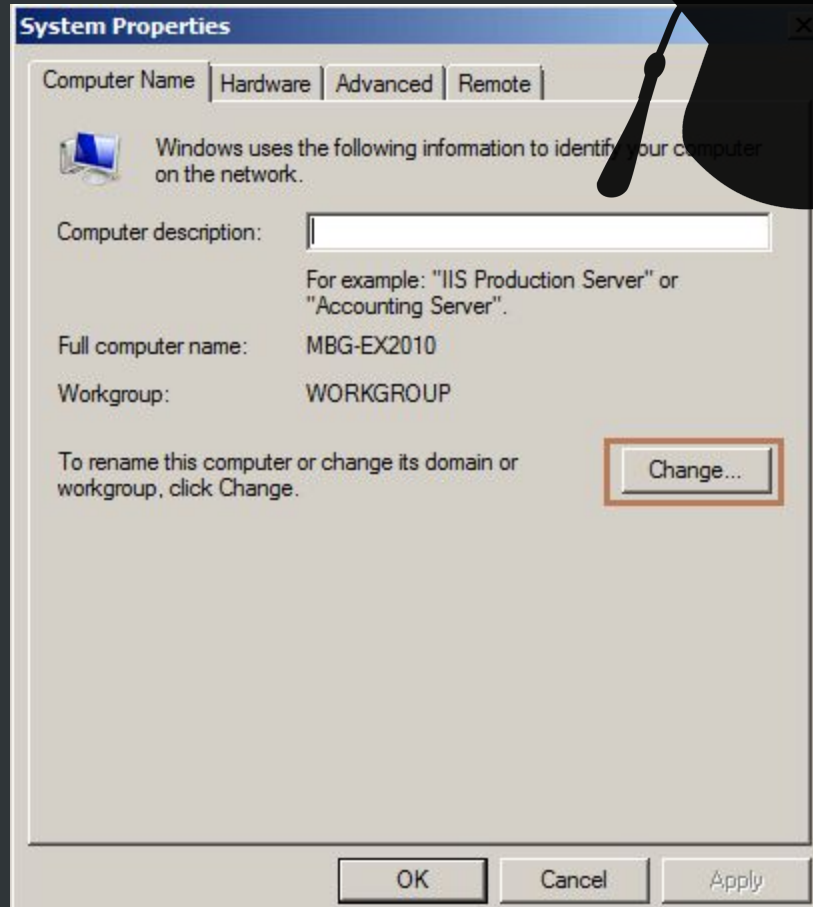
Enterprise

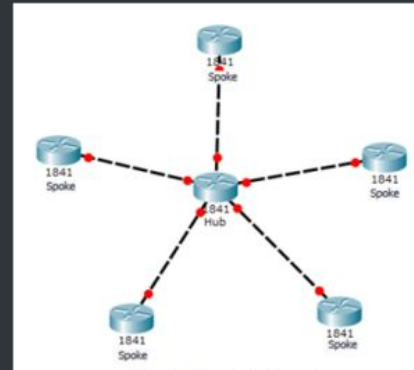
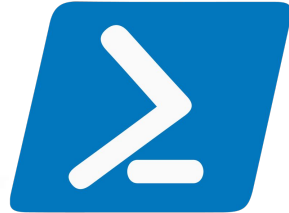
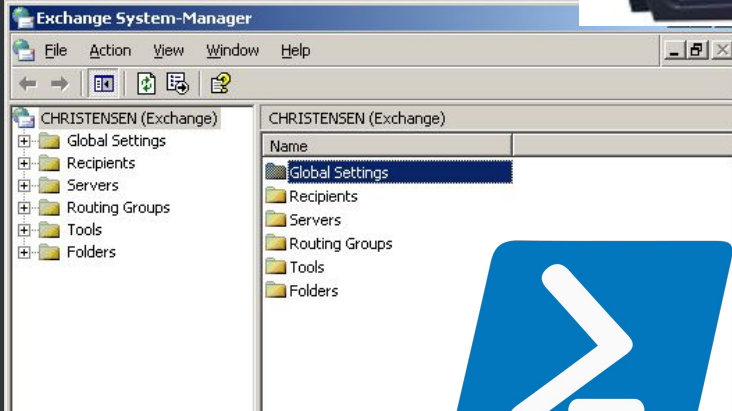
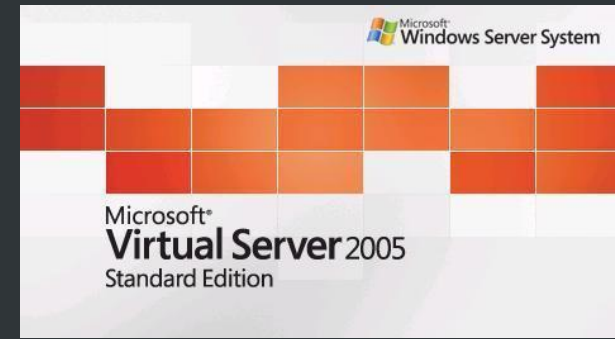
Network vendors

Hyperscalers

Content shops







Exchange  
Server™ 2007

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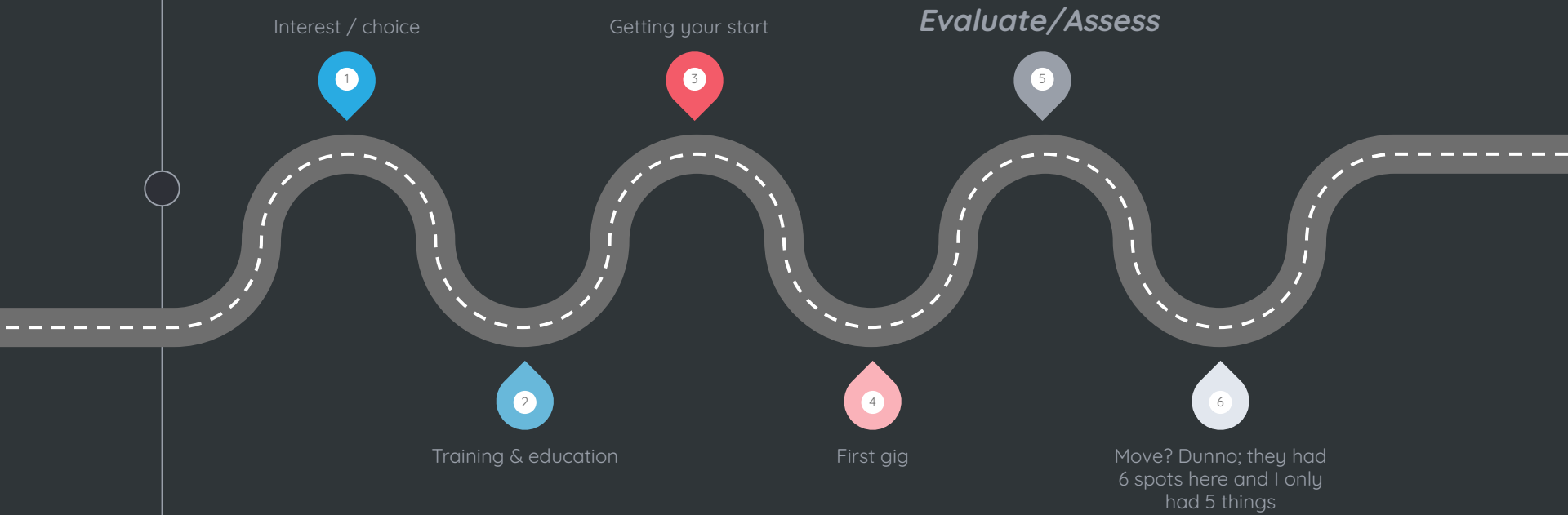
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**DETOUR**





- Organization types for NetEng gigs

ISP/NSP



MSP

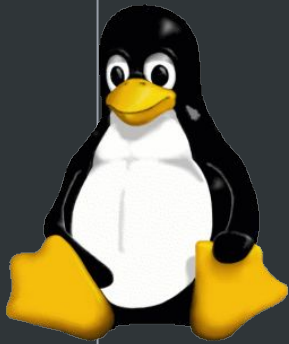
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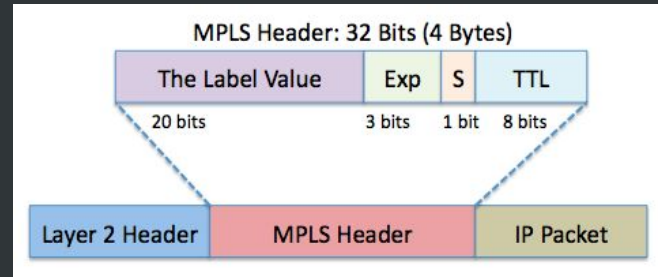




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**STARGATE**  
CONNECTIONS INC.



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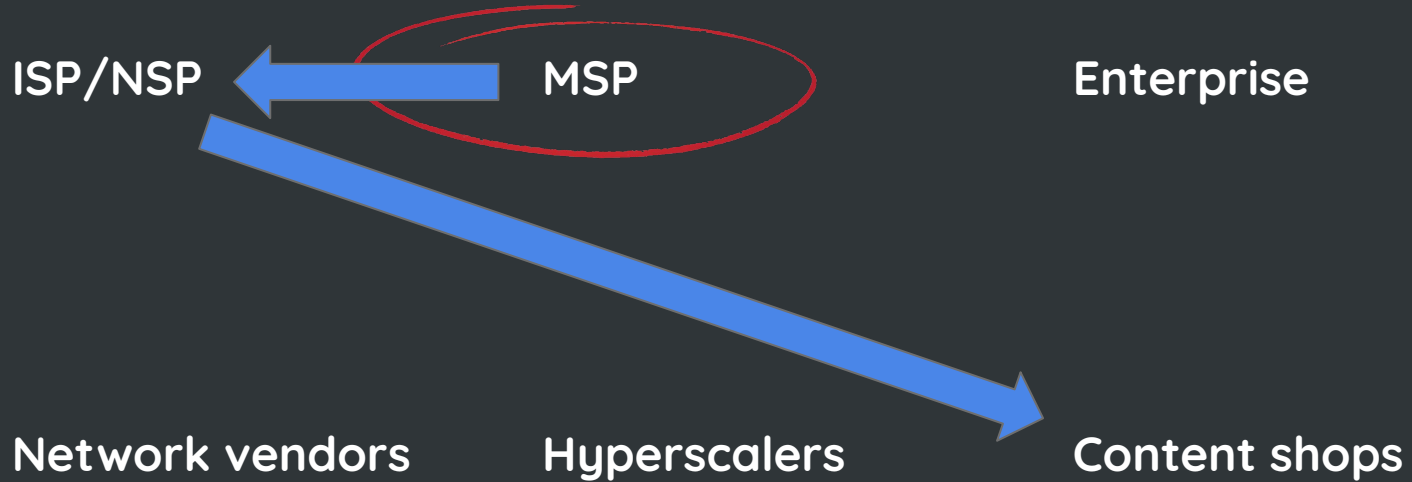
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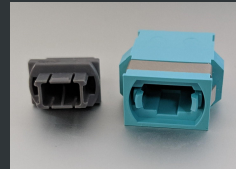
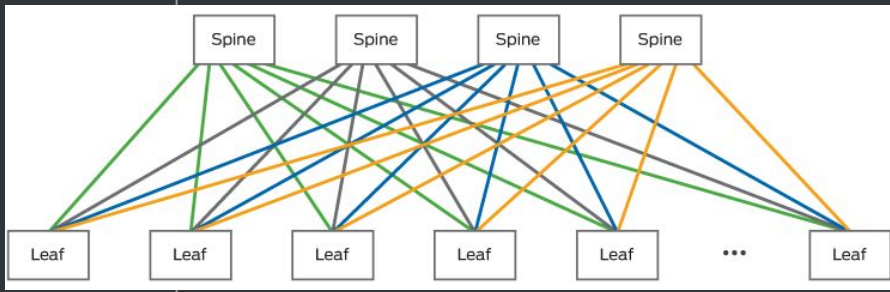
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"Any tips?"

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Network engineers are going to be out of a job in 5 years

- Most people, since 2011

Networked, distributed applications are the way of the future

- Most people, roughly the same time.





Thank you!

~~QUESTIONS?~~

You can find me  
@hugoslabbert