



BREAKING INTO TECH

A crash course on achieving your career goals



*Who am I? Who are you?
Let's find out!*

INTRODUCTIONS

Industry professional. College
Grad. Bootcamp Grad. Self-taught.
Former Bootcamp staff.



**DOMINIQUE
CLARKE:**

**FRONT END
DEVELOPER
AT ALKAMI**

WHAT TO EXPECT

01

This is a short survey of a broad topic. This should spark more questions than it answers, and start you on a journey down a rabbit hole.

02

I don't have all the answers, but feel free to ask questions. Other professional developers are available to help too!

03

Have fun! These slides are available later, so don't worry if you miss something. Feel free to connect with me on social media afterward.



The million dollar question

WHY GO INTO TECH?

01

JOB SECURITY

BLS projects a 13% growth rate in computer and info tech jobs by 2026

02

SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Talent scarcity means healthy salaries across multiple job titles

03

CREATIVITY

Puzzle solving with handfuls of different problems and solutions

04

FLEXIBILITY

Work from home or in an office with flexible hours and nice perks

05

IMPACT

Drive innovation forward and build products that users love

06

PEOPLE

Meet brilliant, funny, creative badasses throughout your career



WHY DON'T MORE PEOPLE GO INTO TECH?



01

TECH MYTHS

Misconceptions prevent both men and women from entering the field

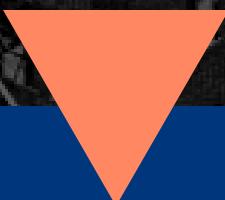


02

CAREER STRATEGY

A well thought out strategy is critical for entering the field and staying in it

TECH MYTH

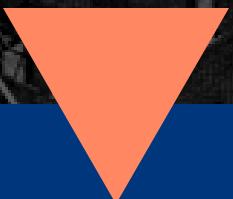


You have to have the right "stuff" to work in tech. Tech talent is inherent.

REALITY

All the skills you need can be learned and built upon.

TECH TIP



Determine which role
you're most interested in
pursuing.

THE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Building great software requires a diverse team with a variety of strengths and skillsets





BACK END DEVELOPER



LAUREN GRAHAM



JOB DESCRIPTION

Primarily responsible for developing the server-side code that comprises the core functionality and business logic of an application.

"I love that I can make a living solving creative puzzles. Software is definitely just as much an art as it is problem solving."



FRONT END DEVELOPER

VANESSA ALVAREZ



JOB DESCRIPTION

Primarily responsible for implementing visual and interactive elements that users engage with through their web browser when using a web application.

"I love The ability to bring a design to life! Amazes me to think that real users out there are actually using something I built is just makes me proud to say 'yup I did that'"



PRODUCT OWNER



CHRISTINE LAU



JOB DESCRIPTION

Primarily responsible for communicating client and business needs and prioritizing the team's work.

"I love owning multiple products features, sharpening my cross functional communication skills and gaining the ability to strategize product roadmap vision"



USER INTERFACE DESIGNER

▲
LESLY FRUDGE



JOB DESCRIPTION

Primarily responsible for establishing the look and feel for various interfaces, including websites, mobile devices, apps, kiosks, games and wearables.

▼
"I love making beautiful designs that also serve as a practical solutions to problems. I want to connect with our users and make what they are trying to accomplish feel second nature."



USER EXPERIENCE DESIGNER

SYBIL MULOKWA

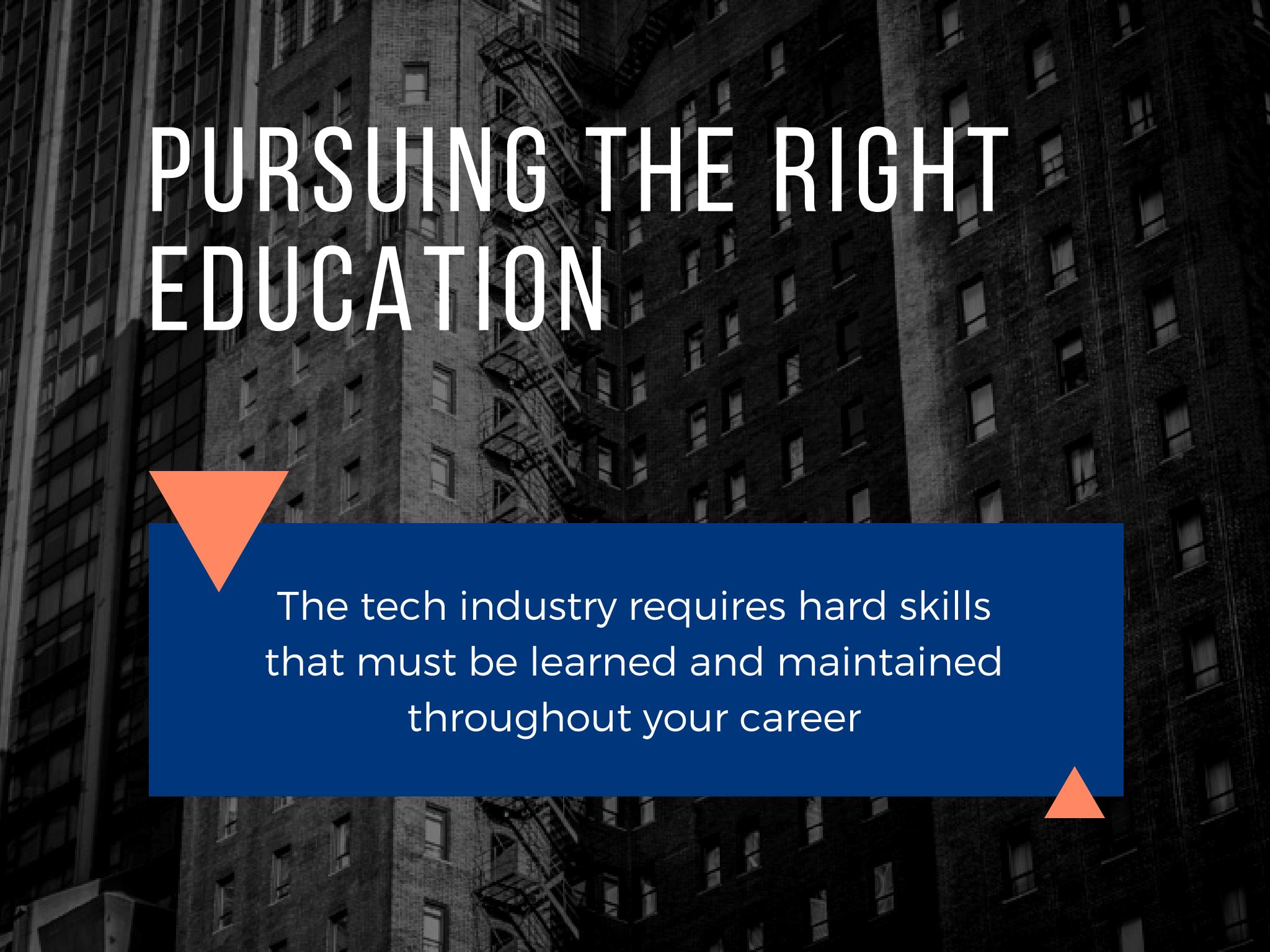


JOB DESCRIPTION

Primarily responsible for conducting user research, interviews and surveys, and use the information to create sitemaps, customer journey maps, wireframes, and prototypes.

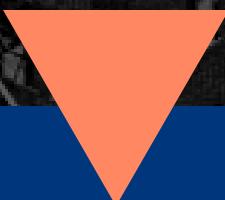
"I love figuring out what makes people tick and using that curiosity to improve various products through deep customer empathy."

PURSUING THE RIGHT EDUCATION



The tech industry requires hard skills
that must be learned and maintained
throughout your career

TECH MYTH

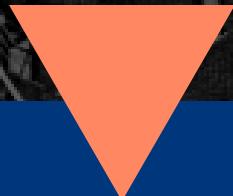


You need a four-year college degree to work in tech.

REALITY

Many* employers value skills over credentials.
How you learn those skills is up to you.

TECH TIP



Determine the educational model that reflects your budget and priorities.

EDUCATION MODELS

01

COLLEGE DEGREE

Typically a two or four-year program emphasizing theory over practice while also providing students with a well-rounded overview of the humanities.

Average costs: \$34,740 per year at private colleges, \$9,970 for state residents at public colleges, and \$25,620 for out-of-state residents attending public universities (College Board).

02

PROGRAMMING BOOTCAMP

Typically a three to nine-month program emphasizing practice over theory, and focusing exclusively on job skills.

Average costs: \$11,451, with tuition ranging from \$9,000 to \$21,000, sometimes with the possibility of deferred tuition (Course Report).

03

SELF TAUGHT

No typical structure. Self-taught developers, designers, and product managers rely on online tutorials, text-books, and constant experimenting to learn.

Average costs: Highly variable, with many resources available for free and other sources of educational content available for a monthly subscription fee.

BENEFITS OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

01

STRONGER FOUNDATIONS

As a CS graduate, you'll have a better foundation in programming fundamentals, giving you a broad understanding of critical topics and enabling you to pick up new technologies more quickly.

02

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

CS graduates, and college graduates in general, still tend to have the leg up on self taught or bootcamp graduates, especially graduates without any degree at all.

DRAWBACKS OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

01

LESS FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION

CS programs often fail to teach students how to develop scalable, enterprise-level software using industry standard frameworks, and rarely touch on web development concepts.

02

VALUE

With a four year college education often averaging more than 6 figures and sending students into years of debt, the benefits may no longer be worth the money

BENEFITS OF A BOOTCAMP EDUCATION

01

FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM

Bootcamps have more flexibility to iterate on and change their curriculum. Often employing industry advisors, bootcamps can remain up-to-date on the latest technologies and frameworks being used to build software today.

02

VALUE

With an average cost up to six-figures less than a traditional four year degree, bootcamps make up for their drawbacks in cost savings.

DRAWBACKS OF A BOOTCAMP EDUCATION

01

GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE

With only three to nine months of intense study, you will often lack a broad foundation in programming basics. You'll have to fight hard to fill in the gaps in your knowledge on the job, and often won't know what you don't know.

02

NEW MODEL OF EDUCATION

Bootcamps are still a misunderstood and often mistrusted educational model. While they'll prepare you for junior roles, you'll have to position yourself as a quality candidate and fight for an opportunity to prove yourself.

PREPARING FOR A BOOTCAMP

01

FOCUS IN ON YOUR GOALS

Consider the type of role you want and the most useful languages, technologies and frameworks for that role.

02

RESEARCH EVERYTHING

There's more to a bootcamp education than just curriculum. Consider the local economy, the local tech community, and the cost of living.

03

SAVE AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE

Save enough to cover the living expenses for the duration of your bootcamp, at least three months after... and then some. You will spend a lot more than you anticipate, especially during stressful months of eating takeout.

04

START LEARNING EARLY

Time is extremely limited in a bootcamp. It's easy to fall behind when you don't have a good grasp of the basics. On the other hand, being well prepared can aid you in preparing better projects during the course, enabling you to build a stronger portfolio.

BENEFITS OF A SELF-TAUGHT EDUCATION

01

FOCUS ON A NICHE YOU LOVE

As a self-taught developer, you'll decide what you want to learn. You can focus in on a specific area you love, like data science or CSS animations.

02

ALMOST FREE

Self-taught is the most cost effective option, with many resources free and large collections of educational content available for low monthly subscription rates.

DRAWBACKS OF A SELF-TAUGHT EDUCATION

01

UNSTRUCTURED

Choosing your own curriculum can be confusing. You rarely know what you don't know, and have to guess at the best possible curriculum to meet your goals.

02

LACK OF COMMUNITY

Community is extremely important. Not only do your peers provide you with contacts for job hunting, but sharing your educational journey with others helps keep you motivated, reducing fatigue and burnout.



LEARNING RESOURCES



[CODECADEMY.COM](https://www.codecademy.com)



[FREECODECAMP.ORG](https://www.freecodecamp.org)



[TEAMTREEHOUSE.COM](https://www.teamtreehouse.com)



[UDACITY.COM](https://www.udacity.com)

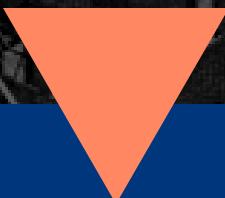


[UDEMY.COM](https://www.udemy.com)



[LEARNCODETHEHARDWAY.ORG](https://www.learncodethehardway.org)

TECH MYTH

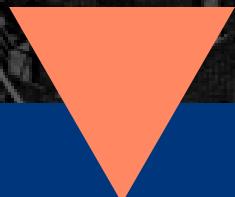


You need to stay up-to-date on every new technology and framework.

REALITY

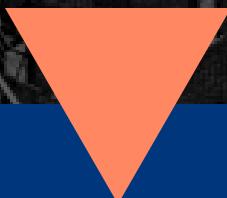
You can learn on the job. You will be surprised what your co-workers can learn from you and you will learn from them.

TECH TIP



Focus on the foundations and basics that will enable you to learn quickly.

TECH MYTH

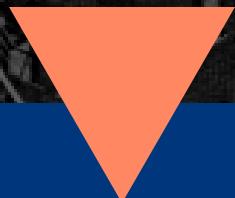


Education is a product, buying you a job

REALITY

Education is a partnership, helping
prepare you for a job.

TECH TIP



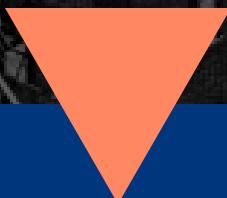
Understand your role in finding a job: working hard, being personable, developing your skills and creating your own opportunity.

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLSET



Learn through doing

TECH MYTH

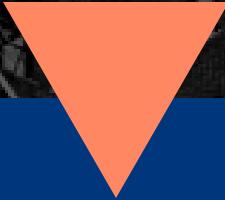


Credentials are a great way to demonstrate your competency.

REALITY

Beautiful, functional side projects are a great way to demonstrate your competency.

TECH TIP



Enrich your learning by creating real, functional side projects. Then highlight them on your portfolio.



THE DEVELOPER PORTFOLIO

01

A CRITICAL PART OF LANDING YOUR FIRST JOB

Job history provides credibility to developers. Without a history of tech jobs, your portfolio will be your main source credibly for your talent.

02

A CREATIVE WAY TO DEVELOP YOUR STORY

Your portfolio is your opportunity to not only to show off your tech chops, but also to position yourself as a great candidate to work with. Are you goofy? Design-oriented? Nerdy? Show it off in your portfolio!

EXAMPLES

dominiqueclarke.github.io

reddraft.com

matthewparker.io

josephtohdjojo.com



PORTFOLIO IDEAS

01

CLONE THE LAYOUT OF A
WEBSITE YOU LOVE



02

CLONE THE FUNCTIONALITY
OF A WEBSITE YOU LOVE



03

REDESIGN A WEBSITE THAT
COULD USE A FACE LIFT



05

SEEK OUT VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITIES AND
BUILD CIVIC SOFTWARE
WITH CODE FOR AMERICA



04

USE AN API TO COLLECT,
PRESENT AND
MANIPULATE DATA



06

NAIL THE LAYOUT OF YOUR
PERSONAL WEBSITE. IT'S
THE FIRST THING
EMPLOYERS SEE

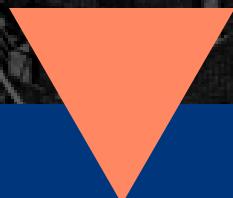


FINDING YOUR FIRST JOB



Creating your opportunity

TECH MYTH

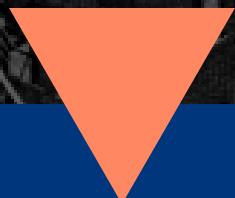


There are TONS of tech jobs. Finding a job is easy.

REALITY

There are far fewer jobs for industry newbies. You'll have to fight for your opportunity with everything you've got.

TECH TIP



Spend time developing your unique, compelling story. Understand what gives you an edge over other candidates, and sell it.

POSITIONING YOURSELF

01

EMPHASIZE YOUR ABILITY TO LEARN - QUICKLY

Highlight the unique ways your education prepared you to pick up new technologies rapidly.

02

PLAY UP YOUR PASSION

As a newbie, you're still intimately familiar with what makes you love tech. Let your love bubble over, giving energy to industry veterans.

03

HIGHLIGHT YOUR SOFT SKILLS

Don't underestimate the importance of culture. Hiring managers are looking for professional developers with effective communication skills, and teams are looking for people they'd enjoy working with.

04

NAIL WHITEBOARDING AND TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS

Whiteboarding is hard. Industry veterans often struggle with whiteboarding, so nailing the technical interview as a newbie can set you apart. "Nailing" doesn't mean getting everything right, but talking through your thought process and logic.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH NETWORKING

01

LEVERAGE MEETUPS AND COMMUNITY

Meetups like Women Who Code, Girl Develop It, and Tech Ladies provide incredible opportunities to meet talented women in tech--and make sure they know your story.

02

FIND MENTORSHIP

Over time develop deeper relationships with industry veterans you admire, creating opportunities for mentorship.

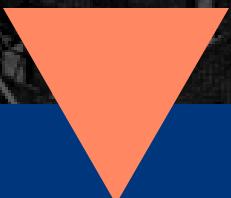
03

FIND VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

Stay on top of opportunities to volunteer your talent -- until someone will pay you for it.

*SIEZE THE
OPPORTUNITY
TO DEVELOP
REAL, GENUINE
FRIENDSHIPS
WITH INSPIRING
PEOPLE*

TECH MYTH

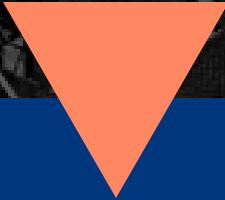


Job descriptions are a checklist of critical requirements.

REALITY

Job descriptions are a wishlist, not a checklist.

TECH STRATEGY



Gain an interview by making
your application stand out,
through creative strategizing.



APPLYING TO A JOB LISTING

01

CREATE AN EYE CATCHING RESUME

Hiring managers spend an average of six seconds reviewing a resume. Creating a well-designed, creative resume could give you critical extra seconds (try [canva.com!](https://canva.com)). Be sure to highlight your hard tech skills and side projects.

02

MAKE YOUR APPLICATION KNOWN

Message the hiring manager--or pretty much anyone at the company--through LinkedIn. Inform them of your application, and how excited you are about working with their company in particular. Remember, job hunting is a lot like dating.

*RISING TO THE
TOP OF
HUNDREDS OF
APPLICATIONS
REQUIRES YOU
TO FIND
CREATIVE WAYS
TO STAND OUT*



LEVERAGING LINKEDIN

01

CREATE A COMPELLING
INTRO

03

LET RECRUITERS KNOW
YOU'RE OPEN TO POSITIONS
(<https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/career-interests/>)

05

HIGHLIGHT YOUR JOB
EXPERIENCE AND PROJECTS
USING MEDIA

02

ASK FOR ENDORSEMENTS
AND ENDORSE OTHERS. ASK
FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
AND RECOMMEND OTHERS

04

POST UPDATES, COMMENT,
AND CREATE POSTS--YOUR
CONTENT COULD GO VIRAL

06

ABOVE ALL: DON'T BE AFRAID
OF COLD INTRODUCTIONS OR
FOLLOWING UP

CREATING EYE CATCHING MEDIA



Full Stack Developer



Lalela App

Oct 2016 – Oct 2016 • 1 mo

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

Live music discovery app with built-in music previews developed during my time at DevMountain. Built with Angular, Node, Mongo, Express., HTML5 and SCSS. Integrated with two third party REST APIs & Mapbox. Won “Best-Design” for personal project during DevMountain cohort.

◆ Discover local shows you'll love ➤ <http://lalela.herokuapp.com>

Media (5)

◀ Previous Next ▶

Map View

Login Page

THE ART OF COLD CONTACTING

01

PICK YOUR TARGETS STRATEGICALLY

Focus on your next career move and target ten contacts with the job title you want. Introduce yourself and make sure they know your story.

02

KEEP THE ASK SMALL

Gather information about your desired role. Ask a question about the company, role, or industry in general. Even better, take the relationship to the next level with... coffee!

03

LEVERAGE COMMON INTERESTS

Maybe your target also attends Women Who Code, went to the same college, or has a similar interest in vintage pinball machines! Leverage common interests you find on their profile to create a connection.

04

STOP BEING AFRAID - IMMEDIATELY

The biggest names in the industry got to where they are by being unashamed to ask for help. You may feel imposing, but people LOVE being asked for help and feeling like an industry expert.



THANK YOU!

Breaking Into Tech • A Crash Course

A PRESENTATION BY DOMINIQUE CLARKE