

# Part 4: Your Brand and Network to Get the Job

IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL  
BRANDING AND  
NETWORKING FOR CAREER  
SUCCESS

Author & Presenter: Ivana Jones



# Personal Brand

## Importance

A strong personal brand sets you apart from the competition and creates a distinct identity that can attract new opportunities in your career or business that align with your goals and values.

## Online Presence

Your online presence includes your social media profiles, personal website, and online portfolio. Having an online presence that is professional, reflects your brand, and aligns with your goals can help you achieve success.

## Networking

Networking involves building and maintaining professional relationships with peers, mentors, and industry professionals. Developing strong networking skills such as active listening, relationship building and following up with contacts is important for success.





# Elevator Pitch & Résumé

## Communication Style

Your communication style is a critical part of your personal brand and includes verbal and written communication skills, tone of voice, and body language. A professional, confident, and clear communication style can create a lasting good impression or how others perceive you.

## Purpose of an Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief summary of your professional identity and goals. It should be used to answer “Tell me about yourself.” in an interesting and engaging way.

## Résumé

Your résumé should reflect your personal brand and highlight your achievements and skills, showcasing what makes you unique as a candidate. Tailor it for each job application to include relevant keywords and accomplishments to increase your chances among the competition. Ensure your résumé is visually appealing, simple, and easy to read so recruiters can clearly see what sets you apart.





# Practice

## Elevator Pitch

Rehearsing your elevator pitch is essential for refining your message, improving your delivery, and developing your confidence.

## Mock Interviews

Mock interviews are practice interviews that help you prepare for job interviews and improve communication skills, reduce anxiety, and increase confidence.

## Asking for Feedback

Asking for feedback on your mock interview performance from friends, family, or mentors can identify areas for improvement and help you gain insight into your communication skills

## Identifying Improvement Areas

Identifying areas for improvement and working on them can help you improve your communication skills and increase your chances of success in job interviews



# Research and Preparation

## First Impressions Matter

Dress appropriately by making sure your attire is clean, professional, and comfortable. Arrive early (10–15 minutes) to demonstrate punctuality. Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake, eye contact, and a confident smile. Sit up straight and avoid fidgeting.

## Research The Company

Understand the company culture and values through its website, social media, and employee reviews. Familiarize yourself with their products, services, and market position. Show interest by knowing recent news, achievements, and any awards they've received.

## Common Interview Questions

Be prepared to answer “Tell me about yourself.” and “Why are you interested in the role?”, along with identifying your strengths and weaknesses. Be sure to focus on strengths that are relevant to the job and weaknesses that you are working to improve.

## Ask Questions

Do your homework on your audience. This will allow you to ask intelligent questions, offer meaningful insights, and show that you're genuinely interested in the conversation.



# STAR Method

## STAR Framework

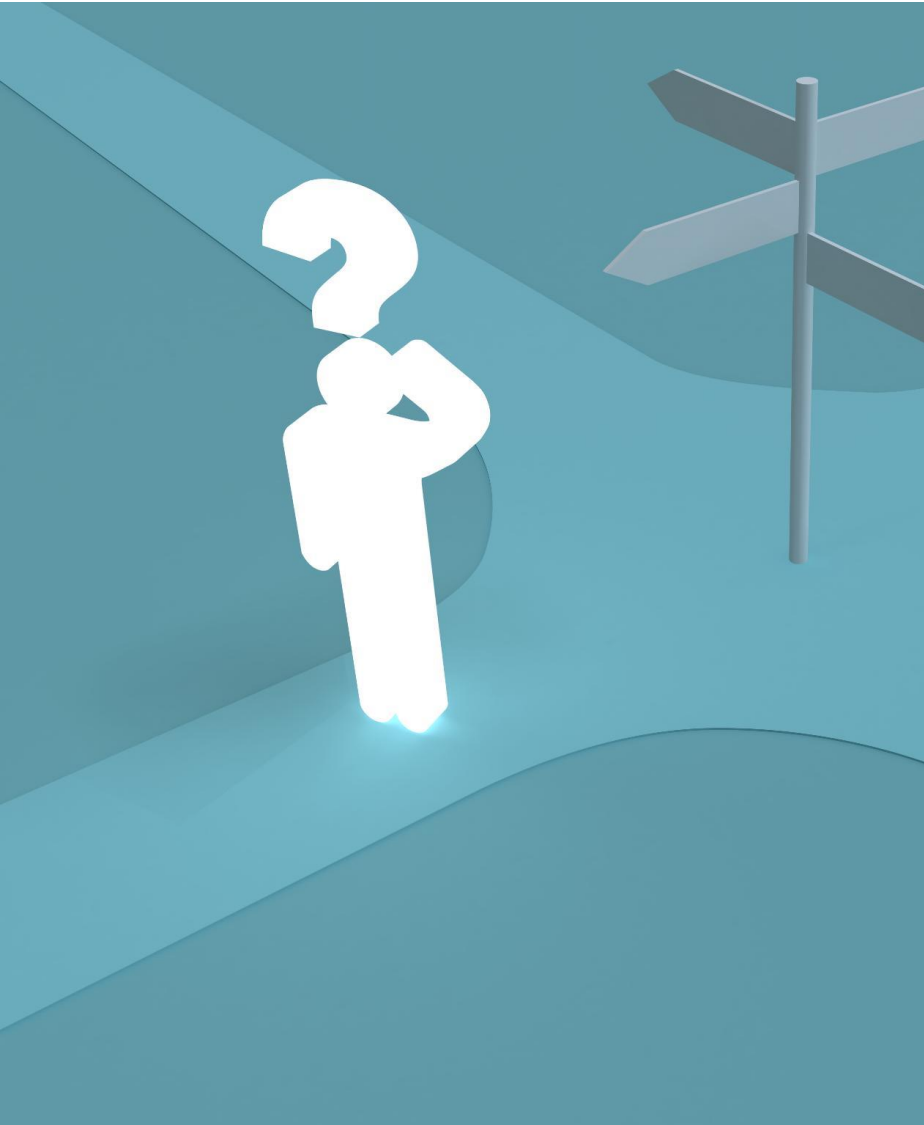
Use the STAR framework to structure your responses to showcase behavior attributes and experiences. This framework involves describing the Situation, Task, Action, and Result of each example you provide.

## Specific Examples

Think of specific examples from your past that illustrate the skills and experiences that are most relevant to the job you're applying for by analyzing the job description and researching the company. Be sure to choose examples that are relevant and impactful.

## Situation: Setting the Context

The Situation component of the STAR method involves providing context for the challenge you faced. This could include details about the company or industry, the project you were working on, or the team you were a part of.



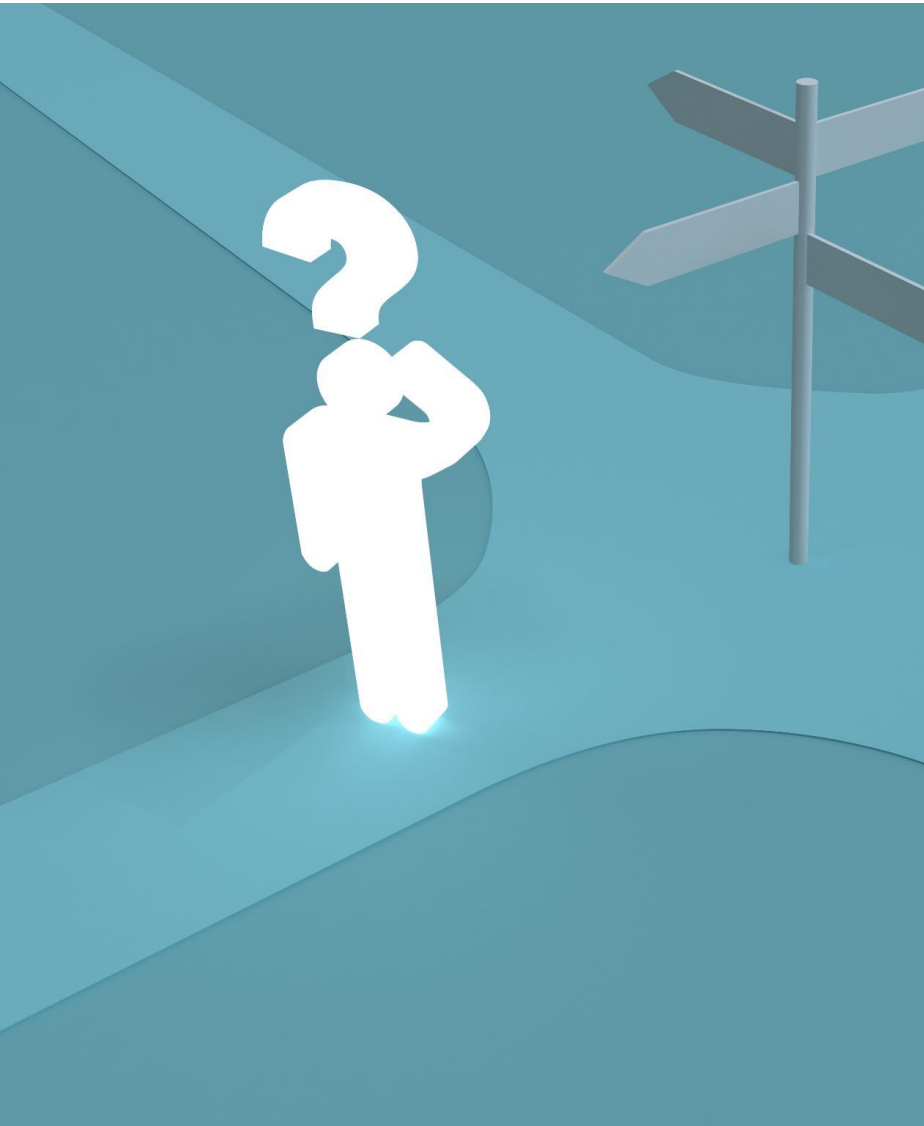
# Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

Situation: Setting the Context

Task: Explaining the Ask

Action: Describing Your Response and Role in the Task

Result: Summarizing the Outcome



Tell me about a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.

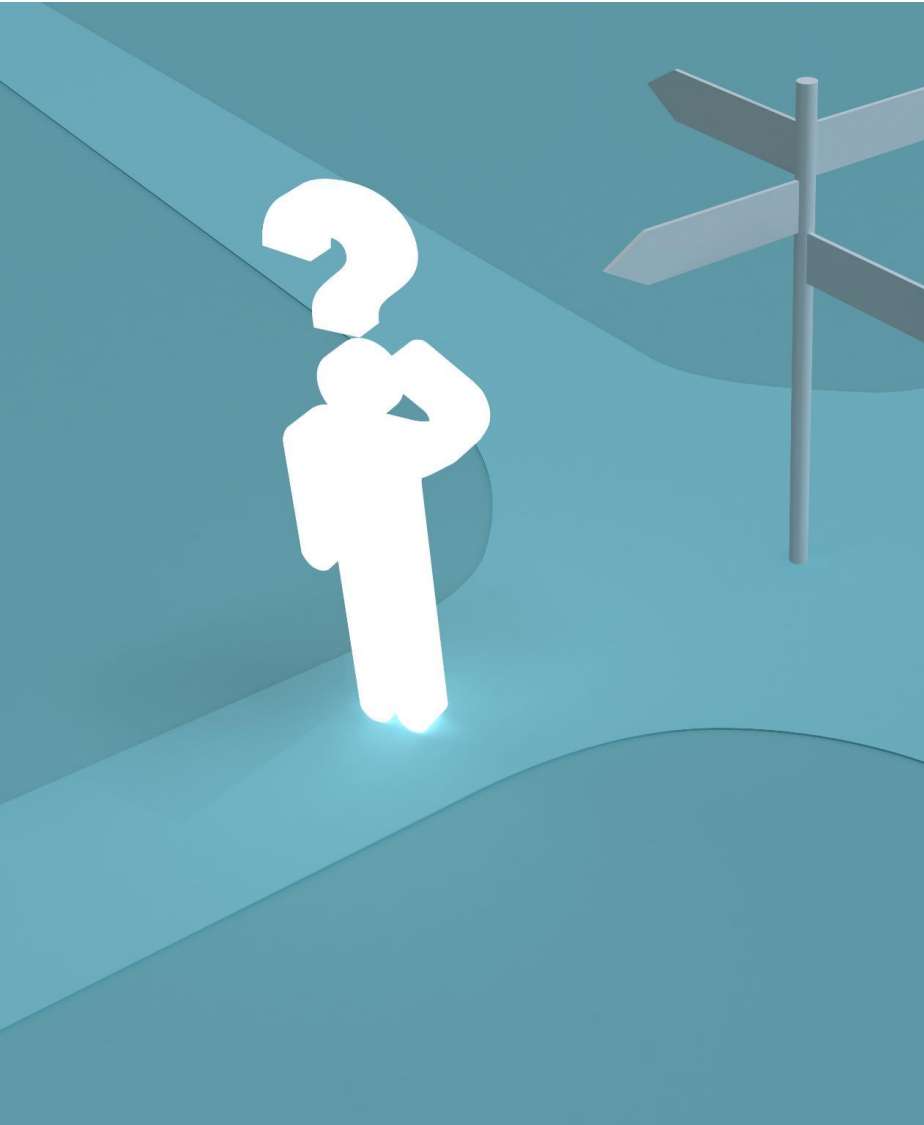
Situation: Setting the Context

Task: Explaining the Ask

Action: Describing Your Response and Role in the Task

Result: Summarizing the Outcome





# Tell me about a situation you think you could've handled better or differently?

Situation: Setting the Context

Task: Explaining the Ask

Action: Describing Your Response and Role in the Task

Result: Summarizing the Outcome



# After the Interview

## Send a Thank-You Note

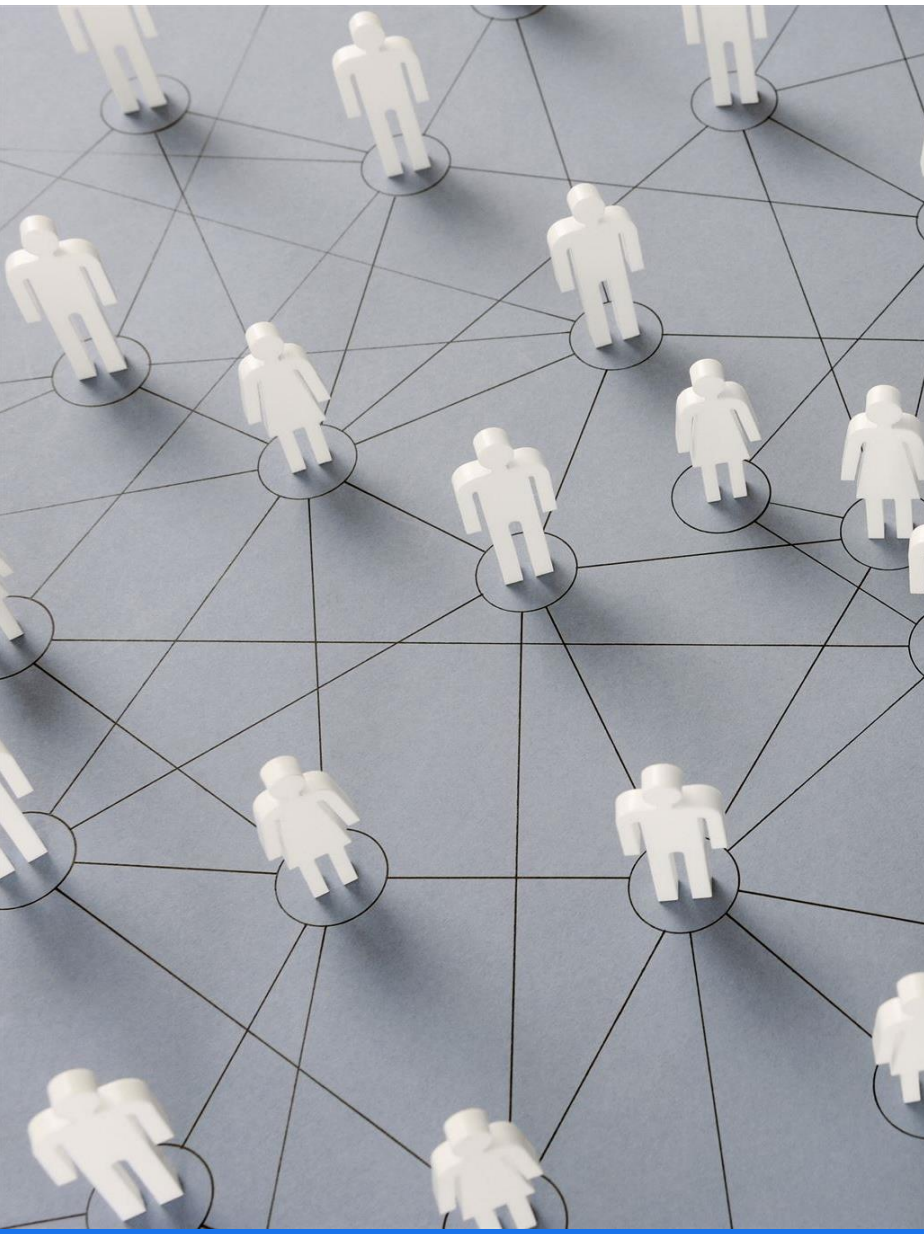
Send a personalized thank-you email within 24 hours of the interview. Express appreciation for the opportunity and briefly reiterate why you're excited about the role. Reinforce your strengths and fit for the position.

## Reflect on Your Performance

Evaluate the experience: What went well? What could you improve next time? What questions can you better prepare for? Assess if the company culture, role, and team align with your goals and values.

## Keep Trying & Be Patient

Regardless of the outcome, maintain a professional connection with the interviewer on LinkedIn incase there are future opportunities. Don't let a disappointing outcome keep you down, use it as an opportunity to learn what to do better and keep interviewing for other positions. Get comfortable with waiting and stay motivated by your end goal, don't be phased by setbacks along the way.



# Engaging with Mentors and Peers

## Network Expansion

Continual network expansion via engaging with mentors and peers can help increase your access to new opportunities, ideas, and perspectives. Broadening your knowledge and understanding is great for your personal development.

## Benefits of Having a Mentor

Mentors and peers can offer valuable insights and advice based on their own experiences and expertise, helping you to make more informed decisions. They're an excellent source of feedback and support during challenges. They can also help expand your network.

## Shared Goals and Values

It is important to identify mentors and peers who share your goals and values, as this can lead to more meaningful relationships with a network of supportive people who can help you achieve your goals.

# Approaching Potential Mentor



## Show Respect

Before approaching a potential mentor about mentorship, ask if they have the capacity to mentor you. Not every mentor will be able or willing to take you on. And if they say no, don't take it personally. They may have too much on their plate already. If they say yes, make sure you respect their time.

## Be Clear About What You Want

Have your goals defined so you can articulate what you hope to gain and how you can benefit from the mentor's experience and knowledge. This will demonstrate that you are serious about the relationship and that you respect their time and expertise.

## Example

'I admire your work and the way you've navigated your career. Would you be open to a conversation about potential mentorship? I completely understand if you don't have the time, but if you do my schedule is flexible so I'm sure one day soon can work.'



# Using Your Network for Job Opportunities

## Leverage Your Network

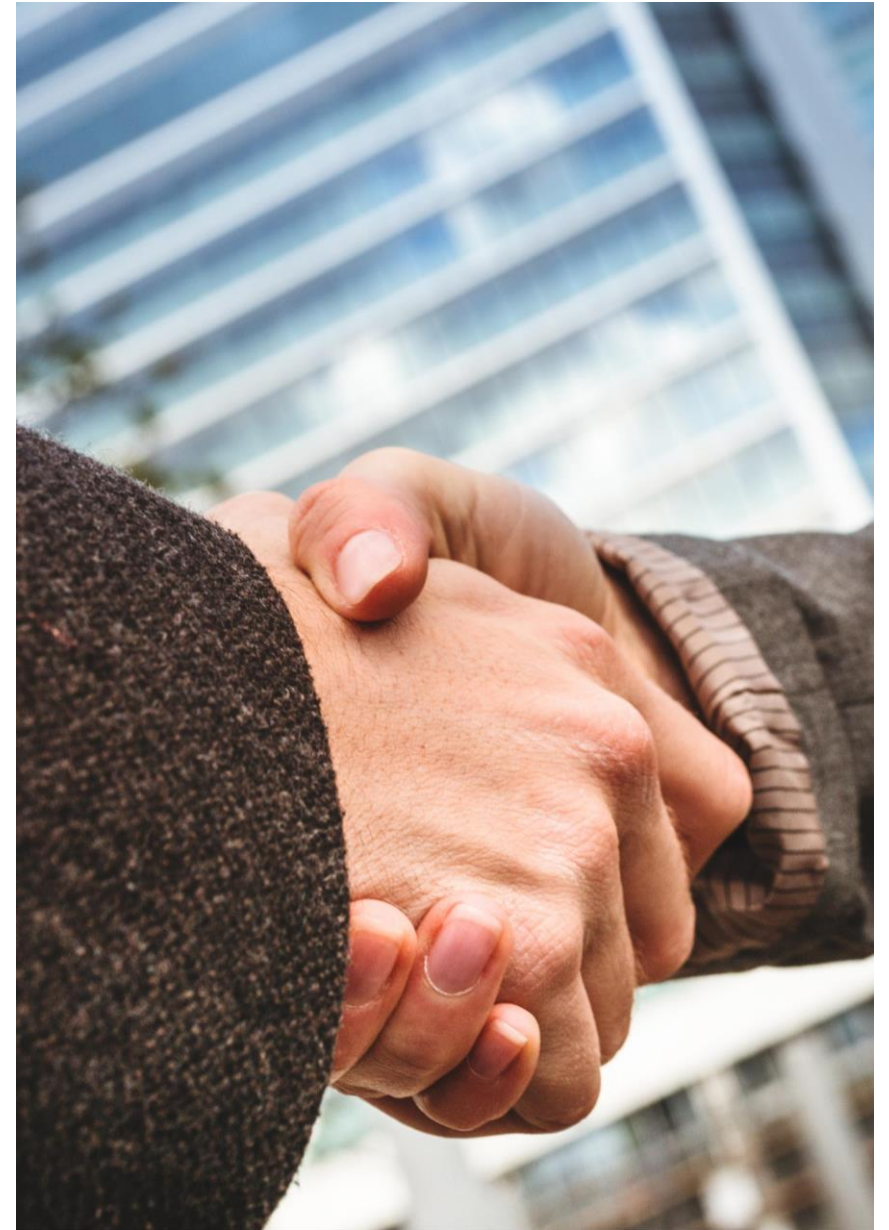
Your network can be a powerful tool for finding job opportunities. Let your network know that you are looking for new opportunities, and they might be able to refer or introduce you to potential employers.

## Learn About Job Opportunities

Networking can help you learn about job opportunities that may not be advertised publicly. By building relationships with people in your industry, you can stay informed about potential job openings before they are announced to the public.

## Follow Up with Your Network

After applying to a job posting or receiving a referral from your network, be sure to follow up with them and express your gratitude. Also pay it forward and offer to help when there is an opportunity to maintain relationships. Be willing to go out of your way to help your network, and they will be more likely to do the same for you in return.



# References



## Importance

Many job applications require up to three references. It's not advisable to ask your current manager to be a reference for a new job. This is why having a strong professional network is essential.

## Professional References

Professional references are typically the most significant and are considered valuable as they can speak to your work experience and skills. Build a relationship with your coworkers by offering help and support.

## Academic References

Academic references can be useful if you are a recent graduate or have limited work experience. They can provide insight into your academic qualifications, achievements, and potential. Build a relationship with your teachers by being an active student.

## Personal References

Personal references can provide insight into your character. They can be valuable for employers who want to know more about your personality, work ethic, and other personal qualities. Build a relationship with your peers by being social and collaborative.

# References



## Requesting

When choosing references, consider people who can speak to your professional skills, experience, and character. Be sure to ask for permission before listing someone as a reference and let them know what types of roles you are applying for..

## Insider Tip

Offer to write a LinkedIn recommendation in exchange for their reference. LinkedIn recommendations are valuable endorsements that help build credibility. Your reference will appreciate that you're offering something in return for their support.

## Writing LinkedIn Recommendations

When writing a recommendation, start with a brief introduction explaining your relationship to the person you're recommending. Clearly state why you recommend them. Focus on their key skills and qualities, providing specific examples to support your endorsement. Avoid using generic language to ensure your recommendation stands out.

# Activity: Networking Plan & Practice Reaching Out

## Recap

---

### Develop Communication Skills

By developing strong communication skills, you can effectively convey your personal brand and value proposition to others and build lasting relationships.

### Craft a Compelling Elevator Pitch and Résumé

Your elevator pitch and résumé are key components of your personal brand. By crafting compelling and concise messaging that highlights your unique skills and experience, you can create a powerful personal brand that resonates with others.

### Build Meaningful Relationships

Building meaningful relationships with mentors and peers is a critical component of building a strong personal brand and network. By cultivating these relationships, you can open up new opportunities and create a supportive network that can help you achieve your career goals.