


Springboard to
Success

Mastering LinkedIn:
Effective Networking
and Profile Building

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Today

- Networking
 - Elevator Pitches
 - Branding
 - LinkedIn
 - Other Online Presence
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Networking

- Why it's important
 - Access to hidden opportunities
 - Building trust and credibility
 - Insight into companies and organizations
 - Learning and mentorship
 - Visibility and branding

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Tactics for networking

- Online presence
 - LinkedIn and GitHub
 - Personal website/portfolio
- Community participation
 - Meetups and conferences
 - Online forums
- Project participation
 - Open Source
 - Side projects (individual and group)

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Tactics for networking (cont'd)

- Coffee and Mentorship
 - Reach out to professionals (based on other networking or contacts)
 - Coffee to talk about how they got started and advice about entering the field
 - Look for mentors that you can meet with on a regular basis to guide you career development and for other introductions
- Alumni and Professional Networks
 - Schools or University alumni groups are another source of potential contacts
 - Look to join professional and industry organizations that host events or offer industry information

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Tactics for networking (cont'd)

- Networking is about building relationships
 - Look to establish **genuine relationships** based on mutual interests
 - Follow-up – after meeting someone, send a personalized message that thanks them for their time
 - Keep in touch
 - Offer value – participate in the meetups and groups you attend by doing something other than just being in the audience. Volunteer at a technical conference or prepare a presentation on something that you are interested in



Resources for Networking



- Local meetups and events
 - Meetup.com
 - Conferences and hackathons
 - College and university events
 - Online and professional communities
 - LinkedIn groups
 - Local forums and Slack communities
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Resources for Networking (cont'd)

- Columbus Networking
 - <https://columbusnetworking.com/>
- TechLife Columbus
 - <https://www.techlifecolumbus.com/events/>
- Ben Blanquera's annual list of Columbus Tech User Groups
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/columbus-tech-user-groups-ben-blanquera-rbmrc/>
- Michael Eaton's Github with Ohio User Groups and Conferences
 - <https://github.com/mjeaton/ohio-tech>

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Resources for Networking (cont'd)

- CBUS Networking Events
 - <https://cbus-networking-events.org/>



Goals for Networking

- Have business cards / personal cards with your contact information
 - Avery clean-edge printable business cards, < \$9
 - Pick an event or meetup that interests you, research the topic or groups, and attend it
 - Take a friend with you but spend at least 50% of your time NOT with your friend
 - Have a conversation with at least 3 people
 - Walk away with at least one contact that you can add to LinkedIn
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Conversation Starters

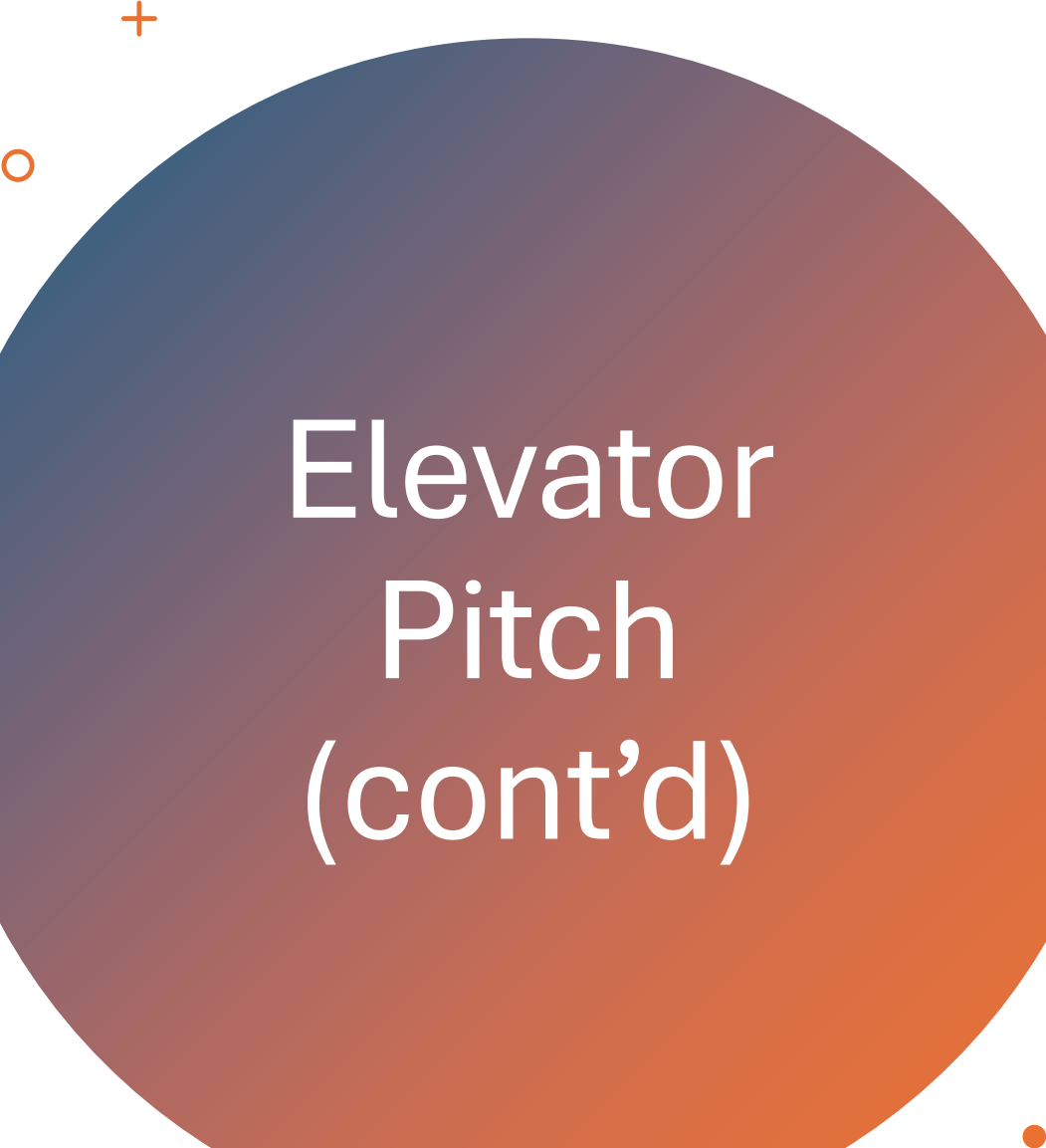
- “What brings you to this event today?”
- “What project or technology are you currently excited about?”
- “How did you get started in technology?”
- “What’s your strategy for staying current with technology?”
- “Have you been to other events with this group?”




Elevator Pitch




- If you were on an elevator and had to tell your story in 45 seconds, what would you say?
 - Steps
 - Develop an objective
 - List core strengths, what makes you unique, any specific examples of expertise
 - Structure
 - Introduction
 - Key strengths
 - Professional highlights
 - Call to action
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Elevator Pitch (cont'd)



- Crafting a narrative
 - Something memorable
 - Something engaging
 - A story with a logical flow
 - 45 seconds (60 seconds max)
 - Practice, practice, practice (off script)
 - You will often only use parts of your story as appropriate
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Building a branding statement

- Creating an impression
- You are the product
- Steps:
 - Identify Core strengths
 - Define the target audience
 - What's the value proposition
 - Concise and Authentic



Examples

- **General IT Professional**
 - *"A results-driven IT professional specializing in cloud computing and cybersecurity, dedicated to developing secure and scalable solutions that drive business success."*
- **Cybersecurity Focus**
 - *"Cybersecurity analyst passionate about protecting digital assets by identifying vulnerabilities and implementing proactive security measures to mitigate threats."*
- **Software Developer Focus**
 - *"Software developer with expertise in Python and full-stack web development, creating innovative applications that enhance user experiences and streamline business processes."*
- **IT Support / Networking**
 - *"Dedicated IT support specialist with a strong background in troubleshooting and network administration, ensuring seamless operations and optimal system performance."*

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Another ChatGPT/AI/LLM Opportunity

- I uploaded my resume to ChatGPT and asked: “Based on the resume, provide a one-sentence personal branding as a teacher and instructor”
- I got this: ***"Dedicated educator and technology instructor with a passion for empowering students through engaging, hands-on learning experiences in information technology, computer science, cybersecurity, and software development."***
- Prompting “as a developer” produced this: ***"Experienced software developer with a strong background in designing and implementing scalable, secure, and innovative solutions using C#, SQL, .NET, and web technologies to drive business success."***



Keys to LinkedIn

- Optimize your profile
 - Build and expand your network
 - Showcase your work and knowledge
 - Stay active and consistent
 - Leveraging LinkedIn for job searches and career growth
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Optimize your profile

- **Professional Photo** – Use a high-quality, professional-looking headshot.
- **Headline** – Clearly state your role, skills, or career aspirations (e.g., Aspiring Cybersecurity Analyst | Python & Network Security Enthusiast).
- **About Section (Summary)** – Write a compelling summary highlighting your skills, interests, and career goals.
- **Experience** – List relevant work experience, internships, or projects with brief descriptions and accomplishments.
- **Skills & Endorsements** – Add key IT skills (e.g., Python, Networking, Cloud Computing) and seek endorsements.
- **Education & Certifications** – Include degrees, certifications (CompTIA, AWS, Cisco, etc.), and relevant coursework.
- **Custom URL** – Edit your LinkedIn URL to be professional and easy to share (e.g., [linkedin.com/in/yourname](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname)).



Build and expand your network



- **Connect with Peers and Professionals** – Start with classmates, colleagues, professors, and industry professionals.
 - Connection request with a message are more likely to be successful
 - **Join Relevant Groups** – Engage in discussions in IT, cybersecurity, or software development groups.
 - **Follow Industry Leaders & Companies** – Stay updated with trends and job opportunities.
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- # Showcase your work and knowledge

- **Share Projects and Achievements** – Post about IT projects, GitHub repositories, or certifications.
- **Write and Share Content** – Publish articles or posts on industry trends, cybersecurity tips, or coding insights.
- **Engage with Others' Posts** – Comment and interact with industry discussions to boost visibility.



Stay active and consistent




- **Post Regularly** – Share insights, IT news, or lessons from your experiences.
 - **Engage with Recruiters** – Follow and interact with IT recruiters for potential job opportunities.
 - **Request Recommendations** – Ask for recommendations from professors, mentors, or colleagues to strengthen your profile.
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◦ Leveraging LinkedIn for job searches and career growth


- **Enable 'Open to Work'** – Let recruiters know you're seeking job opportunities.
 - Also see the result of the ChatGPT prompt: "Advantages and disadvantages of 'Open to Work' on LinkedIn"
- **Set Job Alerts** – Use LinkedIn's job search feature to find and apply for IT roles.
- **Utilize LinkedIn Learning** – Take relevant courses to boost skills and showcase certifications.




Other Online Presence




- Optimize your professional online presence
 - Google yourself
 - Update social media profiles (Twitter(X), Facebook, GitHub, portfolio page)
 - Use other platforms
 - Twitter(X)
 - Follow industry leaders, recruiters, and tech companies
 - Engage in professional discussions and share insights
 - Hashtags (#Hiring, #JobSearch, #TechJobs, etc.)
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Other Online Presence (cont'd)



- GitHub / Stack Overflow (for developers)
 - Showcase your coding skills and projects
 - Answer technical questions to build credibility
 - Keep repositories well-organized and well-documented
 - Facebook and Reddit
 - Join job-seeking groups related to your industry
 - Follow subreddits like r/cscareerquestions or r/jobsearch for advice
 - Instagram and TikTok
 - Follow career coaches and industry influencers for job search tips
 - Consider sharing your professional journey, projects, or tech tips
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Network and Engage

- Network and Engage
 - Actively comment on industry-related posts and discussion
 - Connect with professionals by engaging in group discussions
 - Attend virtual events and webinars
 - Build your network before you need it – NOW!



Be aware of your digital footprint


- Audit your social media for unprofessional content and update privacy settings if needed
 - Avoid controversial posts or comments that may deter employers
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+ • Create ◦ and Share Valuable Content

- Write blog posts (Medium, Dev.to, or your website) about your experiences, coding projects, or industry insights
- Share articles, research, or thoughts on LinkedIn or X (Twitter) to establish yourself as a knowledgeable professional



Key Points

- Get started networking NOW! Set yourself goals.
 - Create an elevator pitch and practice it
 - Create a personal brand statement
 - LinkedIn is the Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat of the business world. Use it early and often but keep it professional.
 - Other online footprints should be a help not a hinderance
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I always welcome your questions. Best ways to reach me:

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- Phone or voicemail: 614-947-6445