## **Building a personal network**

Many students don’t start thinking about building a professional network within the technology industry until later in their career, but it’s good to get started as early as you can. Remember that the more people you meet, the more people who might be able to help you secure your next internship or job.

So where can you start?

### **Your existing network**

At this early stage in your career, it’s easy to think that you don’t have any connections in tech. This is almost certainly not true!

Think of the network you already have:

* College alumni who work in tech
* Friends/classmates who have interned at a tech company
* Professors
* Friends of friends who worked/interned at a target company

### **Growing your network through events and activities**

You can also build your network by making connections with your peers and other professionals. There are lots of opportunities to meet people:

* **Attend any career fairs or career workshops on campus**. Remember that companies attend these events specifically to meet students like you; it’s a great opportunity to connect.
* Through CodePath, sign up to **participate in a virtual career fair and information sessions** which connect you directly with companies.
* Sign up for **CodePath resume review and interview practice weeks**, and connect with the volunteer. CodePath volunteers are actively working as software engineers or tech recruiters.
* If you can, **try to attend software conferences and events** nearby. You can often find events on [meetup.com](https://meetup.com/), or even on your campus.
* If you can, consider attending **nearby hackathons**. Hackathons are a great way to meet and talk to people from various companies. You can even try to meet one of the event organizers.
* Take more **CodePath courses** (as many as you can!) and build connections with mentors and students through these programs.

Once you meet people, add them as a connection on LinkedIn with a short note to remind them of how you met. This is how networks grow.

### **Contacting your LinkedIn connections**

A great feature of LinkedIn is allowing you to find people with whom you have something in common - for example you have a shared connection, or you attended the same university.

* Go to the LinkedIn page of a company you are interested in working at, and click on the link to see all employees of that company on LinkedIn
* Find “Schools” under the filter sidebar to the right, and type in your university. People who you have something in common with are much more likely to be willing to take time out of their day to talk with you or help you.
* Hit “Connect” and then “Add a note” and ask them to chat on the phone. A typical note might read something like this:

Hi! My name is Tati, I’m currently studying computer science at Tufts. I saw you work at Google and I’m really interested in interning there next summer as a software engineering intern.

I was wondering if you had 15 minutes to chat about your work and what it’s like to work at Google.”

Did you notice the three important things you did there?

* **Explained you have something in common:** “I’m currently studying computer science at Tufts”
* **Explained why you are contacting them:** “I’m really interested in interning there next summer as a software engineer”
* **Explained what you want from them:** “15 minutes to chat about your work and what it’s like to work at Google”.

Now wait for them to respond! Many people may never get back to you, but some will respond immediately or within days. It’s good to aim to reach out to around five people a week, as many don’t check their LinkedIn regularly.