5 STEPS *to* LEVERAGING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

and landing the job of your dreams

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

When it comes to landing a new opportunity in tech, an online presence can make all the difference. Below, I outline how I used my online presence to land a new opportunity in tech, and give five steps to help you do the same.

STEP 1.
BUILD TRUST BY CULTIVATING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

Having an online presence is key when you're looking for jobs, clients, projects, etc. Even a general one is enough to get started. By "general," I mean that not all of it must be relevant to your dream industry (a blog in your niche, a how-to ebook, etc.), especially not right off the bat. Just make it relevant to yourself as a person: create a LinkedIn and Twitter and personal site and so forth.

Sure — I have Learn to Code With Me (LTCWM) social media accounts, like my Facebook page. But long before I started LTCWM I had a personal LinkedIn profile, as well as a personal Twitter handle.

Aside from getting your name out there, having online profiles builds legitimacy, and acts as social proof. Because you better believe that if a hiring manager goes to your LinkedIn profile and sees you have over 500 connections, it'll make them feel better about you than if your only Google result is your high school's graduation announcement. It makes you more of a known quantity.

Same goes for Twitter followers, or any kind of social media following. **It shows people like you enough to follow you!**

Additional
READING:

Why Having an Online Presence Matters in Your Job Search

11 Reasons Why You Need to be on LinkedIn as an Aspiring Techie

Start building this kind of presence and social proof sooner rather than later. I am not saying you need 10,000 Twitter followers to get a good job — far from it. But let's face it, having a large following on any social media network looks good.
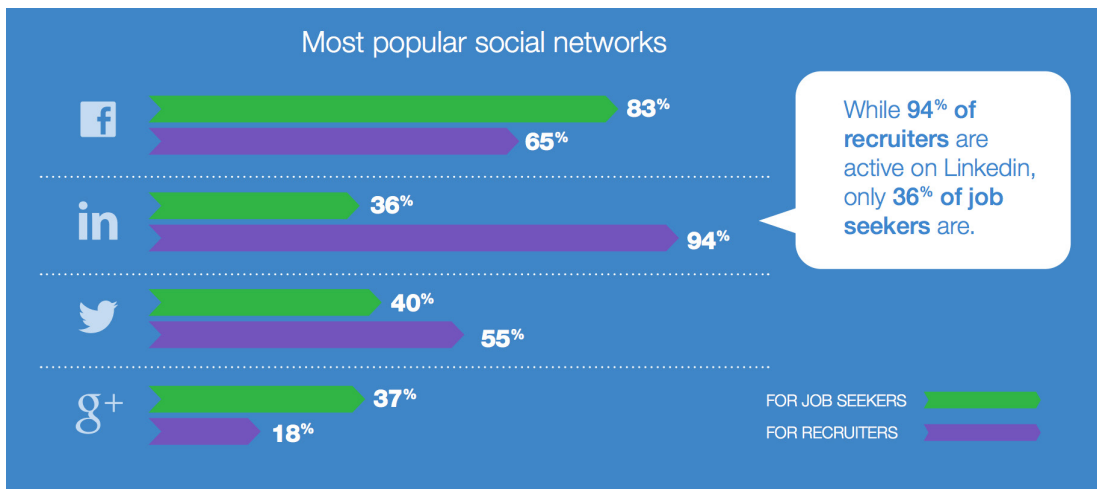
How to apply this in your own life:

If you do nothing else, get a LinkedIn profile. If you don't have a LinkedIn account yet, stop reading right now and make one. According to a 2014 Jobvite study, 94% of recruiters are on LinkedIn. But only 36% of job seekers are. There's a lot of opportunity there.

STEP 2.

ESTABLISH AUTHORITY IN THE INDUSTRY YOU WANT TO WORK IN ASAP

I've been unknowingly building authority in the online education space (and "learn to code" space) from the time I started the Learn to Code With Me site back in April 2014. I say "unknowingly" because I didn't really know what I was doing back when I first started the site. (And what a pleasant surprise it has been!)

Expertise comes with experience, and the very process of building online authority helps you develop that experience.

The thing is, it takes a long time to build authority. You can't write one blog post and call yourself an expert. That's why you need to start NOW by putting your name, your "brand," out into the world. You may not be an expert yet, but that doesn't matter. Expertise comes with experience, and the very process of building online authority helps you develop that experience.

How to apply this in your own life:

What industry do you want to work in? Health? Fashion? Music? Book publishing? Cooking? Start a blog or podcast around it. Create content. Position yourself as a knowledgeable source on the topic.

You probably think if you want to do web development, or web design, you must cover that topic. Not true. In fact, when you couple two things together, it can make you stand out more. I like to call it "passion mashing."

For instance, say you couple your love of food with your other thing (web dev, design). Think about it: if you're a web designer, and have a foodie blog, and apply to jobs at companies like Grubhub or Doordash or Blue Apron, you'll stand out *way* more than the other web designers vying for the role who don't show a related interest.

STEP 3.
BE EXTREMELY SELECTIVE IN THE JOBS YOU'RE AFTER

During a recent job hunt of my own, I was incredibly selective in the jobs I applied to. So selective that I only ended up applying to three jobs in the entire country (since I didn't mind relocating). And I heard back from all three within 48 hours for a screening interview. Depending on which study you turn to, the average odds of hearing back after a job application can be as low as 4-6%, or even less than 1% with big, lucrative companies (e.g. Google).

But when you're extremely selective in the jobs you're after, and you align with the opening (I cover this next in point 4), your odds of hearing back are much, much higher.

In my case, I **only** looked at openings in the EdTech industry. Specifically at companies that created online courses, or helped others create online courses. Even more specifically, I only considered roles that involved creating technical content or curriculum development.

	Position	Company	Listing URL	Location	FT/Contract	Status	Date applied	Date of 1st Interview	Contact name
2	Content Producer, Technology	Lynda	http://www.lynda.com/	Carpinteria, CA	full-time	interviewing	5/9/2016	5/12/2016	
3	Course Developer	Udacity	https://jobs.lever.co/ud	SF, CA	full-time	interviewing	5/10/2016	5/16/2016	
4	Technical Content Creator	Teachable	https://teachable.work	NYC	full-time	interviewing	5/10/2016	5/12/2016	
5	Technical Content Developer, Publishers, Google Technical Services Google	Google	https://www.linkedin.cc	NYC/SF	full-time				
6	Technical writing manager	Digital Ocean	https://www.linkedin.cc	NYC	full-time				
7	Content Generalist	Khan Academy	https://boards.greenhc	Mountain View, CA	full-time				
8	Instructional Designer	General Assembly	https://boards.greenhc	NYC	full-time				
9	Campus Director	Dev Bootcamp	https://boards.greenhc	Boulder, CO	full-time				
10	Content Creator	Khan Academy	https://boards.greenhc	Mountain View, CA	full-time				
11	Instruction Team Manager	Hack Reactor	https://www.smartrecn	San Francisco, CA	full-time				
12	Career Development Associate	App Academy	https://jobs.lever.co/ap	San Francisco, CA	full-time				
13	Career Development Associate	App Academy	https://jobs.lever.co/ap	NYC	full-time				
14	Course Developer (R or Python Focus)	DataCamp	https://boards.greenhc	Cambridge, MA	full-time				
15	Product Manager, Courses	General Assembly	https://boards.greenhc	NYC	full-time				
16	Associate Education Programs Producer	General Assembly	https://boards.greenhc	Boston	full-time				
17	Data Science Journalist	DataCamp	https://www.datacamp	Cambridge, MA	full-time				
18	Product Manager, Growth	Coursera	https://www.coursera.c	Mountain View, CA	full-time				
19	Mentor/Project Reviewer	Team Treehouse	https://teamtreehouse.	Remote	contract				

This ended up amounting to only 26 openings in the entire country...and I even ruled out 23 of those.

If you build an online presence, develop trust and authority, AND are so selective—applying to jobs you believe in, at companies you believe in—your odds are hearing back are *really* high.

> *When you lay the groundwork by building authority and an online presence, you'll have that confidence.*

It's also important to note that when you hear back from multiple companies, all interested in talking with you, it's a total confidence booster. As a result, it shifts your mindset from "I NEED A JOB I'LL TAKE ANYTHING I CAN GET" to ensuring the company/role is a good fit for you. After all, you're interviewing them, too.

Even more, the confidence of knowing you have multiple options will shine through when you're being interviewed. Which only makes them want you more.

Being selective is a win for so many reasons.

How to apply this in your own life:

Be intentional with the jobs you're after. Being selective means having confidence in yourself and what you can bring to the table. When you lay the groundwork by building authority and an online presence, you'll have that confidence.

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STEP 4.

ALIGN YOUR VALUES WITH COMPANIES YOU WANT TO WORK FOR (AND SHOW IT)

One of the most important things to look for when applying (selectively, of course) to job openings is value alignment with the company. This means that your personal values/mission, and interests, and goals, fit with the company you want to work for. If you can provide hard evidence that they do (as opposed to just telling them in a cover letter/interview), it goes even further.

Remember: show, don't tell!

In my personal example, I am passionate about online education and empowering people to gain digital skills so they can improve their careers and lives. It's what drives me. It's what fires me up.

This comes through on my website, as well as my social media profiles. Any hiring manager who Googled my name would know that about me before we ever exchanged a word.

Because even if you don't necessarily "check all the boxes" on a list of job requirements, an underlying passion can speak a lot louder than a few missing skills.

That should be your goal as well. Because even if you don't necessarily "check all the boxes" on a list of job requirements, an underlying passion can speak a lot louder than a few missing skills.

Because what does any employer want? A person who is passionate about the product/service they're creating. People who have that interest and passion will be better employees in the long-term. They've got a leg up on the person who has all the skills but couldn't care less about the mission. (That said, you should at least have the core skills they're requiring— don't expect them to train you from the ground up.)

How to apply this in your own life:

Again, it's another reason to be selective in the jobs you apply to, and only apply to those you care about and have a value alignment with. This way, you don't have to force passion. You don't have to *pretend* you love the product. You'll be authentic, and it'll show.

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STEP 5.
PERSONALITY AND CULTURAL FIT

So, you've done everything else up to this point:

- You have authority and an online presence

- You were selective in the jobs you applied to (while meeting the most basic job requirements)

- And you made sure that your values and interests aligned with the company

The final component in sealing the deal is personality and "cultural fit."

In virtually every working environment, you need to be agreeable—easy to get along with. Because it won't matter if you get every single technical interview question right if you seem difficult to work with.

Skills, technologies, programming languages, etc. can all be taught and acquired. *But a personality?* That's tough to change. And hiring managers and recruiters know that.

In all of your exchanges—email, phone, Skype, in-person—remember this.

Now, I could cover the basics—smile, make eye contact, sit up straight, know your answers to the tough behavioral questions that are commonly asked. But instead, I want to share a little technique I learned while working at LA Fitness one summer during college, selling gym memberships: people feel much more comfortable when the other person has similar mannerisms, behaviors, tone of voice, and use similar language as them.

Is your interviewer talkative and energetic? Embrace your outgoing side. On the other hand, are they more soft-spoken and deliberate about every word they choose? Then be calm and thoughtful when you interact with them.

Now, I am not saying to completely ditch yourself and mimic your interviewer like a robot. What I mean is if you tend to get a *little* excited when meeting new people, and show it strongly (which is something I tend to do), tone it down if the interviewer is on the quiet side. (Or ramp it up if they're not!)

Overall, it puts the other person at ease. I mean, if you're an introvert, have you ever been around a person who was just *too much* and it exhausted you? Or vice versa, as an extrovert, have you ever around someone who was so soft-spoken, you kept wondering if they didn't like you? Interviewers are people too, and it's no different. So, be mindful of their personality type and energy level.

The same line of thought can be applied to all interactions, like email, before you even schedule your phone and face-to-face interviews. Is the recruiter/HR person/point of contact more professional in the way they write, using full sentences and proper introductions? If so, write that way too.

Or is the person super casual, starting off the email with a "Yo!" or the like? Then be more laid back. Aside from getting along with the interviewer, this also helps you seem like a better cultural fit.

How to apply this in your own life:

Be observant of the behaviors of people. Interviewers, but also others that work at the company. Mimic it in relevant ways—emails, language used, etc.—and you'll more likely come across as a better cultural fit. (Which is a huge factor when it comes to making a final decision—how well the individual fits in with the rest of the team.)

Again, don't reinvent yourself just to fit in. And also be aware of the fact that if the culture is very different from who you are, you probably wouldn't enjoy working there, anyways.

CONCLUSION

If you follow the five steps I outlined above, you'll be getting interviews and offers left and right.

But guess what? It all starts with a strong online presence that attracts the companies you'd like to work for.

If you want to have clients, recruiters, and hiring managers clamoring over you, the most important thing you can do today is to make a website that shows who you are, what you can do, and that your values are aligned with your dream companies.

A website is like your homebase. Sure, social media accounts are important—but they work best as a supplement to your site, rather than your only form of online presence.

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This is why I am so excited about my course, Portfolio Dojo.

It shows you how to create a website your dream client or hiring manager will care about. It's okay if you have no idea where to start: the course takes you through each step of the way, from setting the site up, to writing for a target audience, to leveraging your online presence to get the opportunities you want.

Do you want to know more?

Click here:

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I'm excited about the course because it helps you start doing the same thing that has changed my life. Remember those three jobs I applied to, and interviewed for? I now work at a dream company, in a role tailored specifically for me—something I'd have never thought possible when I first started building my site years back.

You never know what opportunities could be in store for you, too. Maybe in a few years, you'll find yourself in a job you'd never imagine today…or owning your own business…or freelancing from a beach.

It all starts now.

Get your name out there and show the world what you can do!

Learn more about Portfolio Dojo here, and sign up today

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