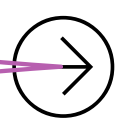
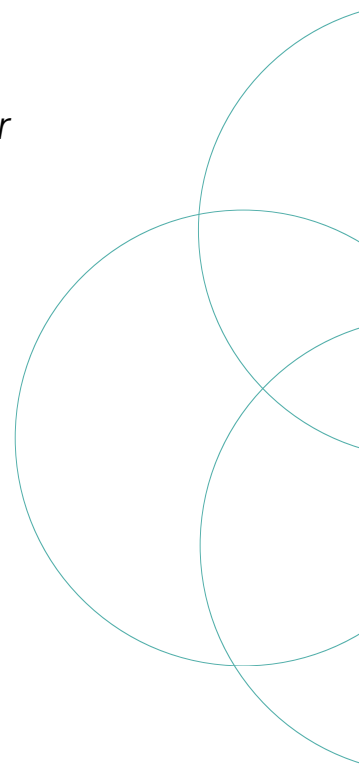


Build Your Professional Brand

Strategies and guidance for conscious leaders to communicate your value, create an effective resume, leverage LinkedIn, start your job search and build your network effectively



LENORE KANTOR
TRANSFORMATIONAL COACH



What's inside?

This guidebook is designed to support you in positioning your professional brand. It includes strategies for how to best represent yourself effectively for what you wish to be known for. You will find suggestions for how to prepare your resume, build your LinkedIn profile and network effectively to communicate your value and build stronger relationships to support your professional growth.

Whether you're an experienced professional with an established brand or just starting out, staying relevant by proactively managing your positioning, building and maintaining relationships and staying connected is important. I hope you will find some useful advice here through practical and actionable steps you can take now to move forward.

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Find more personal growth and professional resources from Lenore Kantor at www.growthwarrior.co. Reach out to [schedule a Discovery Call](#) if you wish to learn more about how transformational coaching can support your process.

About Lenore



I'm a transformational coach for conscious leaders like you. My mission is to empower and guide high-achievers to greater personal growth and more fulfilling work that aligns with their values and authentic leadership. I want you to make the impact you desire by uncovering your truth, leveraging your talent and following your heart.

If you are looking to create positive change in your life and work, you may find my book, ***So, What Do You Do? The Authentic Alchemy Path to Find Who You Are*** (available at www.growthwarrior.co/book/ and Amazon) worthwhile. It offers a structured framework and more insights into how to find your path to purpose. This companion professional branding guidebook offers practical tips for you to implement.

My superpower is helping conscious leaders uncover their true essence through their unique gifts and voice. As a former hard-driving results-oriented corporate marketing executive turned heart-driven soulpreneur for over 30 years, I integrate serious business strategy with creative possibilities and marketing expertise with intuitive insight to imagine a better way forward. I coach, advise and mentor leaders, soulpreneurs and founders at every stage of their growth through Growth Warrior, my private practice, as a Career Advisor for Bard's MBA in Sustainability and Columbia's Career Coaching Network.

Multiple perspectives inform my work from an MBA and design thinking to integrated holistic training in coaching, somatic therapy, energy medicine, shamanic and crystal healing, and modern feng shui. I also lead cacao ceremonies, use EFT (tapping) and reiki among other esoteric modalities. I honor multiple perspectives and lineages to find the common elements and uncover the opportunities and possibilities that are available.

Find more success strategies and leadership inspiration by following me on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) or my website: www.growthwarrior.co or [subscribing to my newsletter](#).

Develop Your Messaging



Understand your strengths and communicate your value clearly to help others understand your unique positioning.

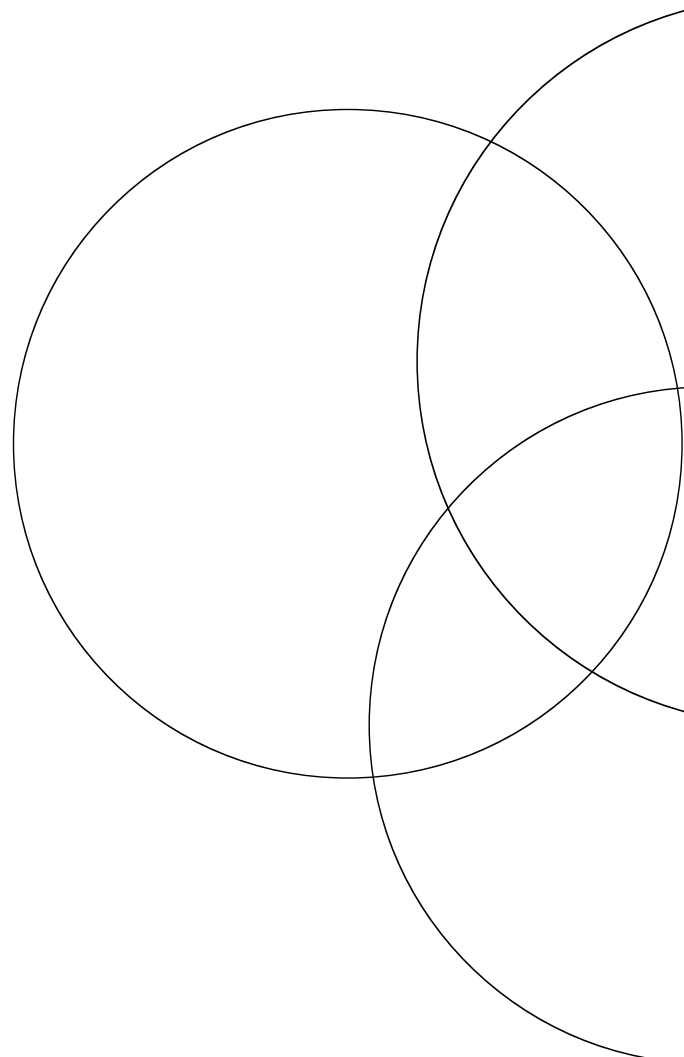
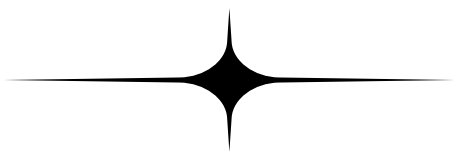
Make Your Brand Authentic

Creating alignment between your personal and professional brand is the key to authenticity. Communicating who you are, what you want, how you add value and why with confidence and clarity are essential elements to make a positive impact.

Here are some guidelines to support you in positioning yourself for more fulfilling work. Start with the 2 most important elements:

- **Understand yourself** (who you are, what you stand for and where you want to go) and
- **Understand your audience** (who you want to work with and how).

Then review the following pages to craft a powerful resume. The questions below will help you gather the information you need so you can identify what is most important for you.



DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGING

Once you have a sense of who you are and what you want, start building your professional brand by crafting the unique messaging you will use to communicate your value.

VALUE PROPOSITION:

Define who you are and what you are seeking in one or more sentences. You can use this “tagline” or positioning overview to describe the type of work and environments that appeal to you and what unique skills and background you would bring.

EXAMPLE:

“Experienced business development executive with strong relationship building skills and B2B financial technology SaaS expertise.”

Refer to the specific messages and target roles you are pursuing when drafting your resume to help others understand what makes you a great candidate for those specific roles and why.



KNOW YOURSELF

PROFESSIONAL BRAND: *What do you want to be known for?*

- Create a clear statement of purpose (or “tagline”) that represents your authentic self, explains who you are and your “why” (what motivates and inspires you).
- Lead with the value you bring to any organization. Use active positive wording and verbs, as well as present tense for any current activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: *Which career achievements are you proud of?*

- Include any meaningful and relevant aspects of your background, for instance big projects or initiatives you worked on, awards or recognition, contributions you’ve made or even volunteer or nonprofit experiences that impacted you.
- You can even include hobbies, travel or personal activities that differentiate you which might interest prospective employers (such as languages you speak).

SKILLS: *What unique abilities do you possess?*

- Include tangible “hard” skills (specific activities performed or training you have).

STRENGTHS: *Which activities are you good at? Where do you excel?*

- Highlight “soft” skills like your organizational abilities, attention to detail, or quantitative analysis that will be relevant for the roles you are seeking.
- Emphasize unique qualities that prospective employers will value (such as reliability, strong written and oral communication skills, ability to juggle multiple priorities...).

VALUES: *What qualities do you care about?*

- Know your “non-negotiables” to clarify your focus, then use these to inform the types of organization that you’re looking to work with/for.
- Consider smaller, high growth startup cultures if you are entrepreneurial, hands on and like to build something from the ground up.
- If you prefer larger structured environments, corporations often have clearly defined specialist roles and training programs.
- Are there other needs you have that might make a specific role a better fit for what you are seeking and where you will excel (ie. Remote/hybrid, training...)?

WORK EXPERIENCE: *List relevant aspects of all your jobs and roles.*

- Focus on the most important activities and the impact, not just tasks.
- Where did you work? List the company, city and country.
- What did you do? Add your title.
- When did you work there? Include specific years and dates.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

BACKGROUND RESEARCH: *Do you understand the company, industry, sector you are pursuing?*

- Do your homework by checking out their website and social media profiles (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) to assess them.
- Understand their business, products, values and leadership approach.
- Follow their news and public announcements.
- Check out GlassDoor, Salary.com or other public sources to find out how employees rate working there.

JOB DESCRIPTION: *What specific role and function you are seeking?*

- For those making a career pivot, consider focusing on 2 to 3 different roles and developing tailored resumes that are customized to each with specific skills that you might highlight and different wording you might use that aligns with the industry or role you are pursuing.
- *Example:* Program management for company or project manager positions for a nonprofit might be similar and have related skills, however you might use different wording and experiences for each role. Check and tailor to each job description.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS: *Which skills are needed?*

- What will it take to be effective in this position?
- Your resume wording needs to echo, if not exactly replicate, the specific way these activities are described in the job description and how you discuss your background.
- Reinforce whatever key points they have highlighted.

CULTURAL VALUES: *What important individual qualities does the company seek in prospective employees?*

- Understand what elements matter to them (for instance are they seeking self-starters and independent performers or team players?).
- Do these soft skills or shared values align with what you care about?

COMPANY MISSION: *What does the organization stand for?*

- What are they trying to achieve? What problem do they solve?
- Is this something that appeals to you and you can get behind?

Design Your Resume



Your resume is a tangible primary way to present your brand positioning to prospective employers. Use these prompts to emphasize your relevant experience and communicate your value.

KEY RESUME ELEMENTS

Focus on these important components to ensure your resume is complete.

Objective or Executive Summary:

A header at the top of your resume can clearly convey your story in one to three sentences. This statement should communicate who you are (your strengths and background), what you want (the role, industry) and how you can add value (your contribution). Use this brief positioning to weave together how your background translates into what you're seeking to demonstrate how you are a fit for the role in question. Remember to reinforce important skills employers are looking for.

Career Highlights, Professional Skills or Accomplishments:

An optional section at the top of your resume can support your goals, particularly for career switchers or those with gaps in their resume, by highlighting 3-5 bullets of your relevant background. This is an effective way to reinforce the skills employers are seeking by emphasizing your key experiences.

- You can also highlight core competencies, certifications, awards and skill sets. However, remember to emphasize the things you want to do and/or that are a fit for the job you are pursuing – that enhance your candidacy and value for potential employers.
- Whenever possible, use the exact wording from the job description to demonstrate you have those specific skills and pass through key word filters.

Work Experience:

Include your actual job roles, companies you worked at with 3-5 bullets (max) describing what you achieved. Describe actual accomplishments and use numbers, when possible, not just activities, along with dates worked at each position.

- Use chronological presentation if your most recent job is most relevant or lead with the most relevant job if you had that experience earlier in your career.

Education: Include your undergraduate, graduate degrees and any certifications.

Format:

Limit your resume to 2 pages, particularly if you have at least 8 or more years of experience. Individuals with less than 5 years of experience should be on 1 page.

Versions:

Create multiple customized variations of your resume for different roles that you are applying to. Build your core template, then adapt as needed.

Sample Resume Format

NAME - mandatory

Location/Address (optional, consider state or country for on-site work)

Email | Telephone number | Social Media links (LinkedIn)

POSITIONING STATEMENT / TAGLINE - suggested

One-sentence tagline describing your unique value and target focus (see example below)

EXPERIENCED SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER WITH EXTENSIVE B2B TECHNOLOGY BACKGROUND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / OBJECTIVE - suggested

1-3 sentences about who you are, what you value and your contribution to an organization. May reference the specific role or include relevant expertise and key words.

Seeking an innovative SAAS platform program leadership role to drive growth and profitability.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS / ACHIEVEMENTS / IMPACT (CAREER HIGHLIGHTS) - suggested

- Contribution / Relevant Experience section is an effective way to highlight your value up front.
- 3-5 bullets with your most significant achievements that prospective employers would value.
- Particularly important for career switchers or those with gaps in their work experience.
- Group background by relevant functional areas and skills or highlight specific projects.
 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Certified PMP who has managed multiple \$100+M projects..
 - STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: Actively cultivated relationships with all levels of management...

SKILLS / EXPERTISE - optional

- 3-5 bullets with professional strengths, relevant software or skills required for the specific job.
- Only focus on those skills you want to use or those needed for the role.
- Can be combined with Accomplishments above, in work descriptions or at bottom of resume.
- Use #keywords whenever possible.
- Helpful for career switchers, work experience gaps or roles that require specific certifications.

WORK EXPERIENCE - mandatory

- Summarize your background – with companies, job titles, dates, locations.
- 3-5 bullets (maximum) under each role highlighting work contribution in active language that mirrors job description and incorporates relevant key words for the position.
- Use more bullets for most recent roles, highlight or summarize less significant jobs.
- For career gaps or switches, consider grouping jobs under skill sets to emphasize relevant expertise

EDUCATION - mandatory

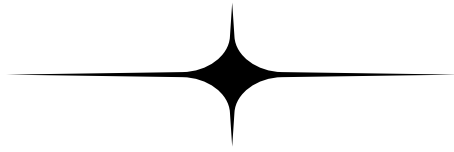
- Add University, concentration, location.
- Include dates for those who graduated recently (optional for those with >15 years of experience.)
- Add relevant extracurricular activities, such as honors, applicable coursework or organizational roles

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS / AWARDS / HIGHLIGHTS - optional

- Add any skills or expertise not included in the top section with details.
- Add additional licenses, specialized software, language skills, speaking opportunities, recognition or awards appropriate for the job you're pursuing.
- Depending on the role, interesting personal details about yourself may be added (optional).

RESUME GUIDELINES

Customize your resume for jobs you are seeking to highlight the right skills.



- **Lead with the most relevant experiences** at the top that relate to the specific position.
- **Make it meaningful** and also succinct. Focus on what you want to do by emphasizing the skills you want to use and experiences that relate to the job you are pursuing.
 - While you will have many strengths, downplay or remove those you don't want to keep doing unless you want to leverage that experience for a lateral move.
- **Choose a visual format** that is easy to read, using bold, italics and white space.
- **Check for typos** and spelling errors. Don't give the reader a reason to pass on your candidacy for a simple oversight.
- **Include key words** (relevant #hashtags or descriptors for your role or industry) to ensure you are including important skills and relevant words that are included in your ideal role and job descriptions, then embed these clearly throughout your resume and LinkedIn profile. Employers use algorithms and AI to search for and identify ideal candidates based on "fit" with their requirements, so echo the language they use.
- **Multiple versions** of your resume may be needed that are tailored for each job and different audiences. When you apply to a job, your resume language should replicate what they describe in the job description, so reorder or prioritize important points.
- **Consider AI tools** to help you enhance your format or messaging to align with specific job descriptions.

APPLYING FOR A JOB

COVER LETTER:

Write a compelling cover letter that explains your qualifications for the position, alignment with the organization and the value you would bring.

- It's about how you can contribute to them and the specific role they have. Describe outcomes.
- Reach out to people who work at the organization, ideally those who understand the department and job function.
 - Communicate your interest and enthusiasm for the company and let them know that you are interested in applying for the role.
 - For those you develop a rapport with, reach out to them to get more information about the role and consider asking them to endorse you and your work.
- **MOST IMPORTANT:** Believe you are qualified for the job and speak confidently about how your background is a good fit for what they are looking for.
 - The goal is for them to easily see you as being able to step into that role and lead because you have the relevant experience, right values to be a cultural fit with them and ability to hit the ground running.
- **Sample Copy:** *"I'm applying with interest for X job and bring Y years' of experience in Z. My relevant background includes: 1)... 2)... 3)..." (List 3 most relevant bullets)*

NETWORK:

Do your homework and contact people at the company to learn more.

- **LINKEDIN:** Great resource for building professional connections, like your own personalized branded professional website in a huge directory. Search for relevant connections, jobs and shared interest groups. Follow interesting articles and relevant news, and develop your professional relationships.
- Once you get to know a contact, you can ask more about the position in question and/or what it's like to work there?
- Would they get a referral bonus for forwarding your resume? If so, ask them to put you forward as a candidate.
- Consider finding others to endorse you and your work to let you in.

FOLLOW UP:

Once you have applied for a position, if you don't hear back, it is okay to send a check-in email after 2 weeks to reiterate your interest. Popular positions can have multiple applications, so following up can bring you to the top of the pile, particularly if you have a specific contact at the company or in the HR department.

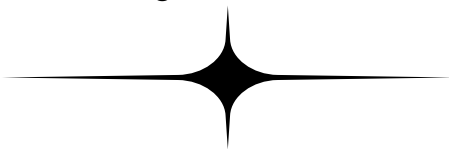
Leverage LinkedIn



As the largest professional network, LinkedIn is the best place to find out about jobs, connect with other business professionals and stay current on what's going on in your industry.

WHY LEVERAGE LINKEDIN?

If you are not utilizing LinkedIn, then you are missing out on access to valuable information about industry contacts, companies, job opportunities and news. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with its capabilities because LinkedIn is one resource to access multiple benefits. From connections with peers and colleagues to potential employers, industry news and events to job postings - there is valuable information available to support your growth. It is an important place to focus for networking, job search and career growth.



HERE'S HOW TO WORK IT

Build on existing relationships.

Reach out to former colleagues and classmates (undergrad and graduate school, even high school or private schools), teachers and community groups. Those you know are likely to be among your strongest resources. Fellow classmates and school alumni are likely to be supporters because you share a common bond.

Access job postings.

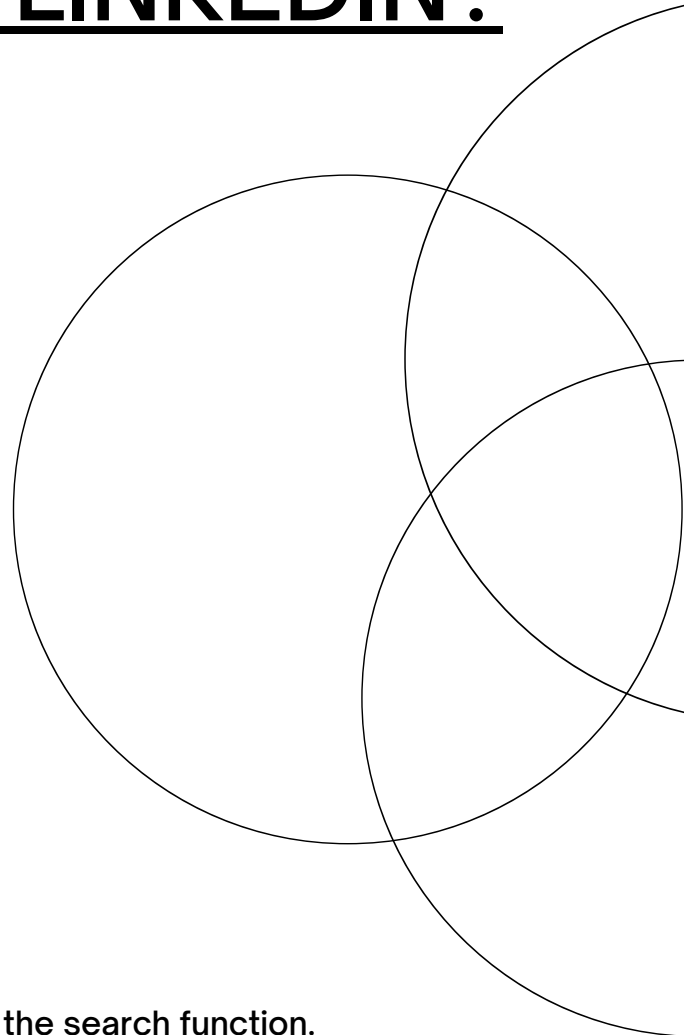
While there are multiple job board sites, many relevant jobs will be posted here and can be searched according to multiple criteria (location, part/full-time, connections, location). Use this to uncover new roles or inform your ideal job description as you learn to better identify and uncover what you want to do.

Use the search function.

It's a powerful tool to find relevant individuals, jobs, companies and articles. Use key words to identify new opportunities, then filter your view based on people, jobs, companies or other features. This gives you multiple options that can be helpful in gathering information, particularly when exploring different opportunities.

Get over your resistance.

While some people prefer to avoid social media, consider making an exception for LinkedIn, particularly if you are exploring a career change. This one platform will accelerate your professional growth and will be an important career development tool now and in the future. Most employers will search your profile.



5 IMPORTANT LINKEDIN SKILLS

Here are 5 of the most important ways to stay current and maximize the platform.

PROFILE:

Update your LinkedIn profile with a tagline (your unique one sentence positioning statement that communicates what you are creating and who you want to be). I recommend defining what you want, not simply using your job title and who you were in the past. Include an appealing and professional headshot and consider adding a background image that best represents your professional brand. Add your education, any relevant project experience, certifications, awards and other aspects of your background that help convey your story.

TAGS:

Include relevant #keywords in your “About” section and work history descriptions so you appear in search results. Examples are #impactfinance #ESG #sustainability #projectmanagement.

CONNECT:

Reach out to former colleagues, undergraduate peers, friends and anyone who is doing things that seem interesting. LinkedIn even shows you good people for you to connect with based on your background. Include a brief note like “I see we both have a shared interest in _____. Reaching out to connect here.”

SEARCH:

Check out job postings, companies and people who are doing things that you care about. Learn more about what’s available and how you can translate that messaging into your own profile.

FOLLOW:

Find interesting people, companies or groups that are discussing topics you care about. See what they’re talking about, like and comment to engage.



YOUR BRAND POSITIONING

LinkedIn is regularly used by companies to identify job candidates, by clients to view suppliers and by strategic partners to evaluate potential relationships. Presenting yourself effectively will enhance your future opportunities. Reference your resume messaging and follow these guidelines to update your professional profile and brand.

PERSONAL PROFILE OVERVIEW

Profile Header

- ▶ Select an appropriate title or tagline to let people know who you are
- ▶ Either use a functional role or create a differentiated position that describes your focus
- ▶ Define what you want to be known for now (not what you are no longer interested in)

Professional Description

- ▶ In the Overview section, explain your expertise and what makes you special
- ▶ Use important key words that others may search on
- ▶ Tell your story by sharing your strengths and skills and what you have accomplished

Photograph

- ▶ Include a photo of yourself – don't leave this section blank
- ▶ Use a professional headshot when possible
- ▶ Add a relevant background image - this can be customized in multiple ways

Companies, Jobs and Titles

- ▶ Organize and outline your work history clearly - where have you worked?
- ▶ Minimize gaps by adding consulting or volunteer roles
- ▶ Describe key aspects of each role that you want to highlight - how did you contribute?
- ▶ Spell company names correctly and link to their website URL

Monitor Changes

- ▶ Use the control settings effectively to protect your privacy
- ▶ Decide to let others know you made changes – or not
- ▶ Select user settings to choose how much to share

Other Information

- ▶ Include relevant education, extracurricular activities, awards, certifications
- ▶ Add social media handles (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube...)
- ▶ Ask colleagues for references to support you



BRANDING AND MARKETING

Your LinkedIn profile is like your own mini-website that allows you to present your distinct positioning. It is easily viewable by peers, potential employers and anyone else who may be searching to see who you are, what you're doing and who you know.

Define Your Brand

- ▶ Highlight what you want to be known for - communicate your focus
- ▶ Clearly describe your areas of expertise
- ▶ Select specific niches where you can distinguish yourself
- ▶ Own your unique personality and tone - be yourself

Connections

- ▶ Establish links to people you work with
- ▶ Connect with all your professional contacts
- ▶ Shoot for at least 500 contacts for “influencer” status
- ▶ Get references and/or testimonials when possible
- ▶ Follow people who are interesting or industry leaders
- ▶ Follow companies that you admire

Join Relevant Groups

- ▶ Select groups you want to affiliate with
- ▶ Schools or companies can be good links
- ▶ Extend your circle of influence to access new information
- ▶ Focus broadly or narrowly by identifying key interests
- ▶ Engage by participating in selected groups
- ▶ Choose the groups that those you want to emulate participate in

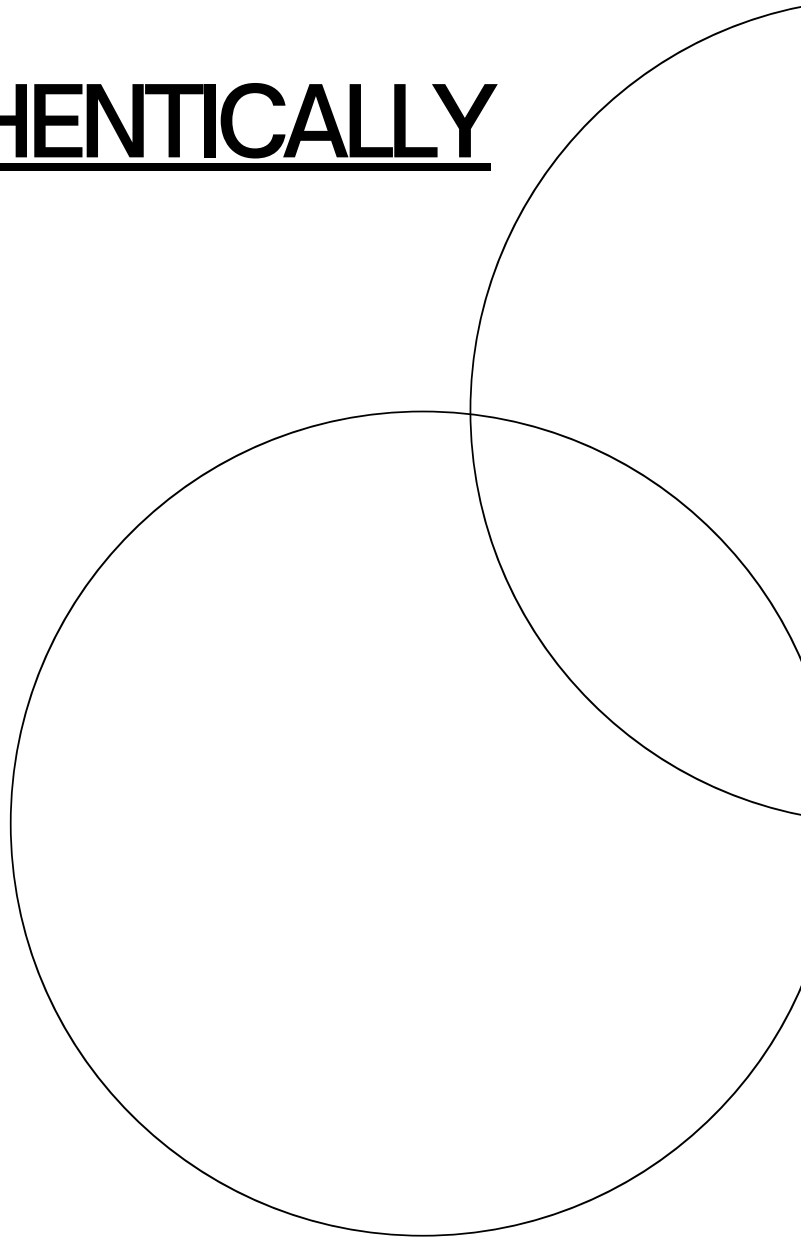
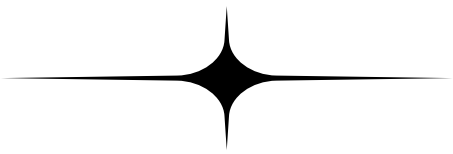
Post Updates or Engage Regularly

- ▶ Establish thought leadership by commenting on or sharing others' posts
- ▶ Target one update a week on topics that interest you
- ▶ Share articles and/or news updates
- ▶ Position yourself as an expert

CONNECT AUTHENTICALLY

You may be thinking, but what if the people I want to connect with don't know who I am? What do I say?

Don't worry, it's as simple as reaching out to say hi and knowing that most individuals will want to connect with you because every one of us is interested in exploring professional possibilities in the future and learning from others. Don't get hung up on having to know every person individually, LinkedIn outreach is your initial starting point to connect which lays a foundation that you can build upon should you want to reach out again in the future.



PURSuing A SPECIFIC COMPANY

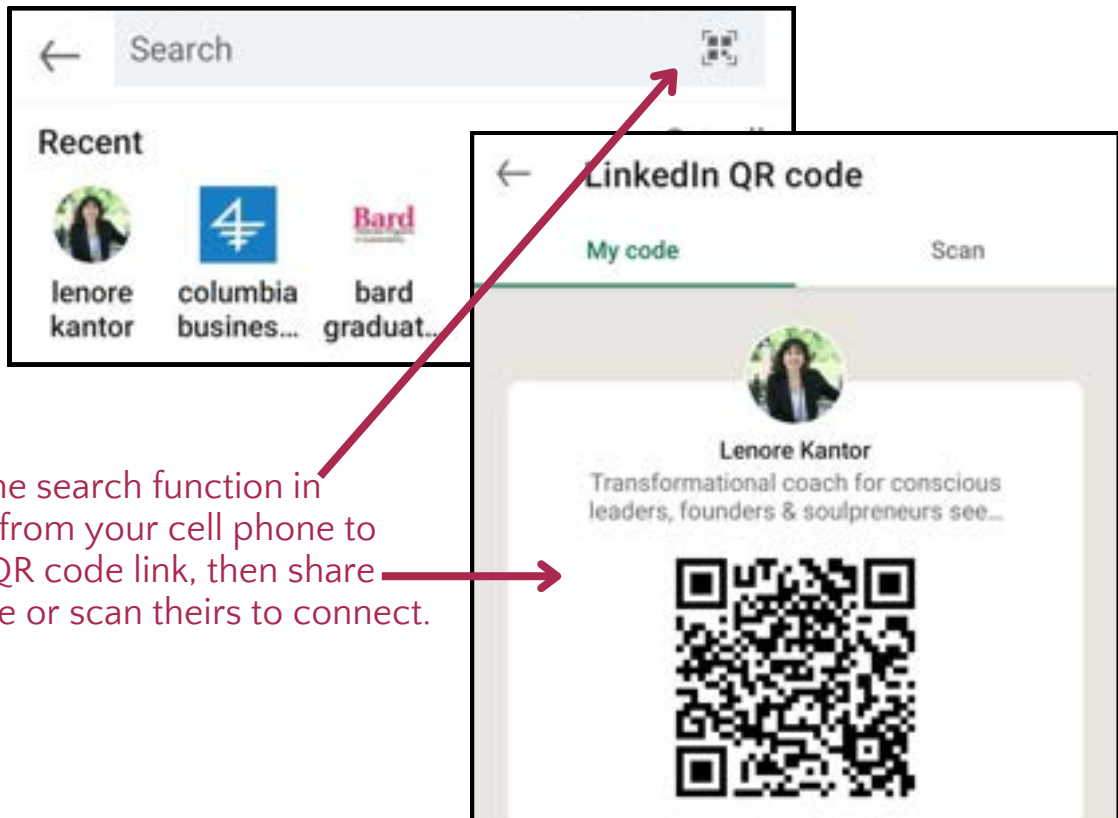
Here's a final suggestion for how to approach informational interviews practically when you have identified a company or job:

- Research and know the **job titles** of the roles you want.
- Once you know which titles are relevant, identify **companies** that interest you.
- Build **relationships** within that company by pulling up its LinkedIn profile.
- Start **following** the company to read their news.
- Go to the People section to see all the **employees** who work there and whether you have a connection to them or not
- Choose someone with a relevant title or with whom you have a 2nd degree **connection** that you could ask to refer you.
- Review individual profiles to find relevant **information** you can relate to (posts they shared, where they live or studied, their background or some commonality).
- Send a **personalized note** asking them to connect and express your desire to learn more about what they do, where they work or some aspect of their background or your shared interests.

Power Tips

CONNECT WHEN YOU MEET IN PERSON.

LinkedIn offers the ability to easily connect with others through QR codes that can be accessed from your cell phone to be quickly scanned by those you meet. You will see the X circled below in red just to the right of when you are into the Search bar. You can either share your code or scan someone else's code.



Access the search function in LinkedIn from your cell phone to find the QR code link, then share your code or scan theirs to connect.

USE THE SEARCH FUNCTION

Not sure where to start? Use relevant key words to look for interesting...

- CONTACTS
- JOBS: filter on location, remote/hybrid
- COMPANIES
- GROUPS

WRAP UP

These are just some ideas to get you going. Consider potential conversations as someone who could become a new friend. You can pretend you just met them at an event - it's the same idea. *"Hi, nice to meet you. How was your weekend? I just discovered olive oil ice cream and was shocked to love it, have you tried it?"* And then you're off and running like old buddies.

Take the pressure off yourself and know you got this!

LINKEDIN SWIPE EMAILS

Just Copy and Paste

To make your outreach and invitations as easy as possible to do, here are some email message templates that you can use or customize.

FOR CLASSMATES OR THOSE YOU KNOW

Here's a sample ice breaker:

- *"Hi, I'm reaching out to expand my **(fill in the blank)** network. Looking forward to connecting with you."*

If you wanted to be more personal, you could add:

- *"I'd like to learn more about your background in **XYZ**."*
- *"We share an interest in **(choose relevant topic)** through **(ABC organization)**."*

FOR SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW

Find something in common:

- *"I saw that you follow **(some interest group)**. I'm reaching out as a fellow member to build a connection here."*

To build or deepen connection, comment on something personal to them like:

- *"I appreciated the article you shared about **(insert interesting topic here)**."*
- *"I'd like to learn more about your experience working at **company X** as I explore future career opportunities. Thanks for connecting."*

Set Outreach and Engagement Goals.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. If you have less than 500 connections, I strongly recommend that you consider setting yourself a goal of making 2 connections a day or sending 10 a week. You could even set aside 10 minutes a week and reach out to the suggested connections that LinkedIn's algorithm recommends. Pick some target number that feels manageable for you. This is a great way to meet more people virtually and is important to position you in your field. Your investment in building industry relationships will support your professional development throughout your career.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

HOW TO PREPARE

As you look to learn more about new opportunities, gathering information can be helpful. Why not go directly to the source? If there's a company you like, look up their relevant contacts and reach out to them. If you don't know them directly, you can ask someone in your network to make a referral. Here are some tips for getting started.

Be specific

In your email or LinkedIn connection tell them why you are reaching out. I would not immediately say you want a job, instead focus on what you are hoping to learn about and why you thought they might be a good connection (for instance, you were impressed with their background or you want to learn more about their company).

Make it easy

Keep your message straightforward and clear. Then request a brief 15 or 20-minute call to ask them some questions. Demonstrate that there may be something in it for them because you have some knowledge, interest or enthusiasm to share.

Keep it relevant

Share why you are interested and how they might benefit from connecting with you (for instance you are doing research in a new area and would like to learn more from an experienced practitioner or you're from a related industry and are exploring different strategies that may apply in your sector).

Give them 2 options

Make it easy for them to say yes by asking if they are available at this time or that time? Then they can choose one or respond that those don't work for them.

Don't take things personally

People are busy and don't always respond. Some companies don't let employees access LinkedIn from work, so they may only check periodically. Don't let that deter you from continuing to reach out.

Follow-up

Persistence pays off. If there's someone you want to reach out to, then check in with them regularly. Once a week is a normal cadence.

4 Key Networking Skills You Need



Relationships can enhance our professional growth. Here are 4 important ways to maximize your connections and create more professional opportunities.



1) NETWORK STRATEGICALLY

Build relationships with those you know (for instance, former college or graduate school classmates or business colleagues) and ideally with individuals at companies you are interested in. Choose the topics, companies or sectors you care about and start developing relationships there. We are mostly likely to easily connect and build rapport with those with whom we share common interests.

A great way to start expanding your network is by following key influencers, attending industry events (whether online or in person), reading relevant journals and articles. You can begin building your own professional brand by starting to publish your opinions and thought leadership on different platforms (for instance social media channels, Medium or LinkedIn) so others can learn about your perspective.

Choose the places and channels that resonate most with you. While some people don't like social media, there are other ways to connect (for instance through emails or podcasts and of course IRL - in real life). Each platform and venue has its own different energy, so choose what resonates with your style. For instance Facebook, Instagram or TikTok are more personal and informal, while LinkedIn tends to be more professional. In this guidebook we'll be sharing tips on how to leverage LinkedIn effectively to give you more career leverage. Know that there are new forums evolving regularly (Reddit, Clubhouse...), so find what you like and stick with it. ***Do what works for you!***

You get the idea. ***Just start somewhere to put yourself out there.*** You have to be in the arena and show that you bring value to those you connect with. If you're just getting started building your network or early in your career and aren't sure what you're looking for yet, simply find people who interest you and reach out to learn more about them, their background or company. While some of this is a numbers game, it's most important to focus on quality over quantity. Find the people who are interesting to you and start to build relationships with them.

2) BUILD RAPPORT

We are more likely to enjoy connecting with those who we share interests with. Finding common ground with any connection is a great place to start because that makes it easy for them to take an interest in you on a basic level. They don't need to become your bestie, but people like to help people they like.

Keep in mind that the 3 stages of building relationships are:

1) KNOW >> 2) LIKE >> 3) TRUST

It's easier to become closer to someone once they have actually decided they like you. While reaching out to total strangers can seem awkward, think of having a conversation. To make it easier on yourself, here are some tips for making your initial connections.

Keep things light.

You don't need to razzle dazzle people when you meet them. Just be yourself. Bring your warm, open, friendly and curious personality to build a genuine connection.

Keep the ends in mind.

What's your desired outcome? Get clear on what you hope to accomplish in the conversation to stay on message. Here are some possible objectives depending on whether they are a colleague at your existing company, a college alum or an industry professional you've never met before:

- o Introduce yourself by finding common interests/ goals/ backgrounds
- o Learn about the company they work at (culture, growth, etc...)
- o Learn about their industry
- o Learn about their background if it seems interesting
- o Learn about their job if you're evaluating whether that role might be a fit for you
- o Learn about a project they're involved in

Consider your angle.

Share how and why you are reaching out and consider how you can add value to them. You might want to learn more, share an article, describe a project or even just stroke their ego through admiration. Create some kind of anchor for the conversation which can be based on common shared interests. For instance, "I noticed you graduated from X college a few years ago. Which skills you have applied most from your years at school?" Be genuine and authentic in your interest and that will come through.



OUTREACH TIPS

KISS (KEEP IT SHORT & SWEET)

Keep your emails or phone calls really brief and to the point. Here's an example of what to communicate which you can modify based on your specific goals.



SAMPLE EMAIL

"Hi X, I'm reaching out to learn more about your work as a Program Manager. I'm currently looking to switch careers (or pursuing my MBA or exploring new industry sectors) and am evaluating future opportunities in your industry. I'm interested in doing similar work and would appreciate getting your perspective as an experienced professional in the field.

Could you spare 20 minutes for me to ask you some questions about your experience? Would you be available on Tuesday at 10AM or Wednesday at 3pm for a brief call? Thanks in advance for your time. I look forward to connecting with you."

NOTE THESE IMPORTANT OUTREACH ELEMENTS

Make sure to include these when making a new connection:

- **INTRO:** A little about you to make them interested
- **CONTEXT:** Why you want to connect
- **ASK:** What you would like to discuss and how much time you'll need
- **TIMING:** Check when they are available - give them 2 options
- **THANK YOU:** Express gratitude and appreciation for their time



REFERRAL BONUS.

Get an introduction whenever possible! It's much more effective to say "X person recommended I contact you." Or better yet, have Y person send an email copying both of you to make the introduction. This will increase the likelihood that you will make a connection as people like to say yes to doing a favor for a friend.

3) BE PERSISTENT

Don't take it personally if you reach out and don't hear back from the people you reach out to. Stuff happens and people are busy. Some don't check LinkedIn regularly or may be prevented from accessing it through their company network, so sometimes it takes a while for people to respond. I just took a month for me to hear back from someone I've known for years after I sent 2 requests through LinkedIn and a separate follow-up email. He apologized for the delay and mentioned not using LinkedIn regularly.

- **Use multiple outreach methods.** It may take several times before they respond. Consider reaching out by LinkedIn, email and phone. In some cases, more is better.
- **Be assertive, not aggressive.** Don't be a pushy pest, but more of a friendly connector. Say something like: *"Reaching out to see if you have 15 minutes to connect about your work. Your time would be so meaningful to me as I gather information about working in LMN. XYZ suggested I contact you as a leader in the field and I value their opinion."*

4) STAY IN TOUCH

Follow through and follow-up.

Make sure to track your communications with your network and what you discussed. You could use Excel, Trello, Google doc or Calendar - whatever works for you. This way when someone makes a referral or gives you advice, as a courtesy you can circle back later to thank them and let them know how you've been progressing.

Some ideas to keep your follow-ups interesting are to share...

- What did you learn since last speaking with them?
- How are you applying their advice?
- What information can you share to build on your initial conversation?
- Who else do they recommend you get in touch with?
- An article they might find interesting.

Let's Connect

Want to find more fulfillment through authentic alignment of your personal and professional identities? Reach out for a complimentary Discovery Call to discuss your goals here:



<https://calendly.com/growthwarrior/discovery>

We will explore your vision and you will walk away with more insight about your path. Together we can explore whether coaching can support your growth and future opportunities.