

Course Name- Complete guide for campus interviews: Step by step preparation for Internships and Full-time jobs

Professor Name- Prof. Vinod Aravindakshan, Prof.Vibin Aravindakshan

Department name-Humanities and Social sciences

Institute name- IIT Palakkad

Week-02

Lecture-04

LinkedIn optimization

Hello folks we'll step a little deeper into optimizing or writing the content on linkedin so we discussed earlier about how important it was to build a good networking via linkedin but those people that you connect with are going to come to your profile page so you need to start doing some amount of optimization to your profile so let's step a little deeper into it we got to cover largely these three topics and we will spend some time into each of these items today. Firstly, why LinkedIn? I think it has been pretty obvious over the over or maybe this last two decades, definitely this last decade that every connection has kind of moved to a virtual presence. So, while you can connect with many people locally or physically, there is a much larger ecosystem out there that you are now connected to via such networking platforms like LinkedIn. These include people from your alumni from your schools, it includes groups, it includes communities, it might have people who are connected by the same interest. So, there is a very different world that we live in where things can be diced and sliced in many different ways and you can connect with individuals and have a connection or or a relationship built which can be leveraged for your long term career success. So, that is the gist of why for LinkedIn.

LinkedIn happens to be the most popular professional platform today, while you could do the same networking in many different ways. So, LinkedIn clearly has the advantage in today's world of being one single stop for all professionals to come together. So, we have the why's and why LinkedIn together and let us step into the world of optimizing your content and connecting on LinkedIn. Students have a resume which they have been prepared for both for your career and placement center, but they also have a way in which they can showcase the skills on online platform like LinkedIn.

Now resumes have a very rigid requirement that they have to be a one pager. So that limits the amount of content you can write into it. For example, you have to say only the projects that are relevant for that particular job to be highlighted on a resume. Now, students might have had a significant amount of work that they have done, which is over and beyond what is just highlighted on the resume. They might also have other interests that they may want to talk about.

They may also have achievements that are worth highlighting. So, naturally a platform like LinkedIn makes it a perfect place to put all this information together. So, look at LinkedIn as a way to augment your resume, even if you are going through the regular placement route. So, I have seen that recruiters who come for a campus interviews, do not just look at your resume, but they also look at the LinkedIn link that you have provided. So, that they look at your link, they understand a little bit deeper about you and use it in addition to all the other inputs that you have provided like your standardized scores, tests that they may keep and maybe some amount of screening that they do.

so all in total they look at the candidate and then decide hey this candidate is good to like take forward so linkedin is definitely a significant piece whether it is on campus or off campus one

of the problems at least in the how linkedin algorithms work is that you have a very strong connection with the first level of connections there are immediate people who are connected with and friends of those connections as a second layer of connections But, beyond that that that algorithm is a little hazy. So, you might not be aware of for example, if there are job postings or there are important bits of information related to new availability of jobs or if there are connections that are way beyond your second network. The information flow from them the third or beyond never comes to you. So, it is important to have a wide network, it is important to have a connection via very different systems or societies and we will discuss a little bit more into it. But understand that all that you see on LinkedIn are generally are relevant to you, but they are within the circle of your first connections and your secondary connections.

Despite however things are you would always know that even for people who are like impossible to connect with you can always follow those individuals. So, one of the things I noticed this might be even valuable for startup founders is that VCs are very difficult to connect with they might have thousands of connections already and they refuse further connections. but they are someone who can be followed. So, you can always follow them and keep up to date on all the postings that they do and that becomes a valuable source of information related to opportunities within industry or any new funds that they may be throwing up. So, if you are looking whether to like work for a startup or create your own startup for example, that becomes a potential source of information.

And that is this information is not just for VCs, it is for everyone. You can follow big famous individuals and then have update of what they are doing or what they were following and use this way to actually understand little bit about your technology space and or your space that you work with and push the boundaries of where you want to go. You have to optimize like I said the LinkedIn profile you have had and there are a few standard rules that every student needs to know. There is a difference between a professional platform and a platform like for example Facebook where you can just throw a picture write some stuff. LinkedIn has a certain set of rules just like anything else like life and that is necessary for you to actually come out strongly as a professional individual looking to build a career and companies take this quite seriously.

So, just on the onset when you enter your LinkedIn profile page, there is always a banner that hangs out in the background and there is a picture that happens. So, remember that these are two layers that you need to optimize. Regarding a picture, I think there are some standard rules like you have to have like 60 percent of the of the frame as your face. Do not have something that is zoomed out or zoomed in. It does not look good and it is not what is expected.

Have a natural tilt. If you look at most professional photographs, you would see that the face is actually tilted slightly to a side and not standing full front on. right the shades and backgrounds are of a natural color all of individuals are advised to actually have a smooth natural smile as an expression and take this and have your photograph taken through a professional all this matters it matters because your the person looking at you on LinkedIn, if they are a potential recruiter is going to make judgments within a few seconds. And it definitely helps to have a very professional and good receptive appearance as you portray yourself on LinkedIn. So use these rules.

There are some other bunch of thumb rules over here. You might want to read a little bit about them. Similarly, the background that you notice is something that is a statement of you right. So, for example, the the person standing there in the first picture has a something related to a speaker in a certain event that they are proud of. So, it is it becomes a symbol of who they are.

So, it may be worthwhile to call that out. if you are working for a company and you are very proud of that company and that becomes our institution and that is something that you might want to highlight as your background. Please talk to the relevant person within your university or your industry and see if that is a background that is okay to be displayed into your profile page. All these are small details, but they help make your profile really professional. again a little bit more nuanced details.

So, if you look at the photo on the left or on the right, you can see that there is a slight tilt, a smile on the face, natural background that is not harsh to the eye, there this a professional attire and eyes that are wide open. So, it clearly reflects confidence from the person. So, these are some of the cues that you might need to watch out for definitely the pictures are taken by especially the picture on the left is taken by a professional photographer and that that reflects right the quality of picture that comes out is very clearly noticeable. There are also places where you can actually upload your photo and get a sense of what that looks like. So, for example, the Photofeeler app actually gets you a sense of like how competent your images, how likeable, how influential if those matter.

I think a competency and having some sort of professional appearance definitely makes it important. So, if you cannot judge it for yourself, use some of these automated systems to give you the feedback or ask your friends and relatives, someone who has been in the professional background for a while to make the judgment call for you. you this is Vinod's LinkedIn profile I think a few things worth calling out right at the beginning you see that the URL is customized for his name and it does not have random things like Vinod Arvind Vinod 123 xyz or whatever those alphanumeric things that come up one of the first things that you need to optimize when you enter into LinkedIn is to optimize your URL to be something as close to your name as possible. So, grab if your name is something that is very common. If it is Krishna, Rama, if it is George, Joseph, those names are going to be pretty common.

It is rather difficult for you to find a URL that is not already taken. But in case those things are available, grab them. If not, try to find one that is very close, as close to your name as possible and does not have random alphanumeric combinations out there. It makes one your URL easily searchable and secondly something easily memorizable. If you look at the banner, we know this put Cisco because he did work for Cisco for a while and that was what he wanted to reflect in his banner and he has a picture that reflects again 60 percent of the frame taken by the face, it has a smile, it has a slight angle and a tilt and these are some of the thumb rules that you might want to take through and use this as a reference.

Next within the profile section is the about me section. About me section is not there for you to write a story or not for you to write whatever comes to your mind. It is a very clear expression of interest into the roles or opportunities you are looking for. So, be very specific in describing who you are. what is your like background, what is the work and what you are looking for.

So, for example, this particular person has talked about their inclination or interest in analytics and taking up opportunities in consulting. So, they make it a point to spell that out. So, you might want to say that your give your background, sum up your background briefly, talk about your interest, talk about your skills and why you are a fit and look talk about what you are looking for. If it is an internship talk specifically that hey you are looking for an internship. If you are looking for a full-time role, talk about the full-time role.

If you are talking about opportunities within like a certain region or a sector, it is worthwhile to call that out. So, for example, if you are looking for opportunities only in Delhi, you might be worthwhile to call out that looking for opportunities only in that region in Delhi within this certain set of segments that you are interested in. So, do not take the about me section lightly, it is also those that figure in into that into any sort of matching algorithms that the recruiters use. So, today there is a lot of automated systems that help recruiters identify profiles that are a good fit for the roles. And when I do a search, the keywords that are over here becomes a very critical input into the kind of algorithms that I am using.

So, be very mindful, read the job descriptions, put in things that are valid for you, reflect your skills and give a very clear indication of what you are looking for. The next segment of a LinkedIn is clearly where you express or you list down your work experience. So, you have to use a model called the star model. We will describe maybe more into it into one of those interview sessions. So, star model comes out as what is the situation, what is the task, what is the action and what is the result.

So, every work that you do. So, for example, if you are talking about an industrial experience and you are talking about the work that you have done, you necessarily have to talk about what was that task or what was the situation. that was in existence, what was the action you performed and what was the outcome of the result. All these three things need to be written down into a short concise way in which you can express that whole idea. So, for example, the first line about that about the industrial experience, we talk about someone who used softmax regression to predict different defect levels in product samples and they were able to decrease a wastage by 10 percent. So, there is an outcome there is a very clear action and they were there is a hint at what was the problem which is related to some quality issues right.

Similarly, if you look at the operational research work down at the bottom. you can see that there is a part of an operational analytics project which is there to improve certain processes and reduce primitive maintenance. So, that is all related to the background and there is a certain outcome that has come out to which is decrease the breakdown efficiency by 10 percent. So, it talks about what is the outcome, what was the situation and what did the person do? The person did a statistical process capability analysis that was a summary of their work that they did to actually go ahead and reach that particular outcome. So, it is very very clear that it fits the star format and secondly it is very clear on outcomes.

So, remember this is something that students have seen miss out a lot on they end up writing an action saying I built a software system which used and that is it I did a software system that used maybe a language a Java or maybe something else and then they stop with that. It is not clear what you are achieved by it. It is very important that you talk about what is the outcome from that particular activity and give a little bit background of why that activity is important. I think that gives a sense of the recruiter and the hiring manager to understand why they should be looking for a candidate and is this candidate good enough to actually come and work in professional environments. A professional environment always has task and outcomes and you would want to show yourself as a candidate who has seen that in life and performed that repeatedly in the past.

Your past is always an indication of your future potential, at least recruiters believe it. So therefore, keeping that formula in mind, remember to talk about your situation, task, action and result at every point of your work experience. That has to be applied both for your resume as well as for your LinkedIn profile. So when you write these experiences in LinkedIn profile, use

the same format. Talk about what was the role, what was the company, what time period to what time period, where was it located and then talk about the work experience itself in the situation, task, action and result.

So, both the examples you see on the screen are the ones that are very clearly spell out all those the role, the company, the time period, the location and also talk specifically about what was the situation, task, action and result. Other than the whole section where you talk about your work experience, LinkedIn has a place where you can actually showcase your accomplishments. Think of these that are the ones that helps you stand out compared to rest of the audience out there. So, for example, if there are publications. please please please definitely put the list them out it gives like if you are looking for any sort of research roles publications of course become important and it is not possible to put all publications in a one page resume but it is very easily possible in linkedin list them out talk about the value Similarly, if you had experiences working for say some organizations or if you have for example leadership roles, please call them out.

Any sort of consulting role, any sort of like managerial role requires that you actually have a wide experience handling lot of leadership roles. So, it becomes very easy to talk through. Similarly, if you have won awards and medals on things that are important. For example, when I was at Georgia Tech, my team participated in a certain competition and we won certain awards for it. When I was going for consulting interviews, these things played a big role.

So, when you talk about, I participated in a certain VC partners case competition and came out first among so many contestants, it gives a credibility that this is a person who can actually handle a consulting project and come out with outcomes. So, this is an example. Showcase those abilities that are relevant for your job and that showcase your skill. It is not necessary that these are the ones that are like, let us say, the ones that make you the national best or maybe the world's best.

If you have that, that is kudos, great to you. But if you do not have that, any accomplishment that is relevant is worthwhile calling out in LinkedIn because there is a lot of space out there. do not waste time talking about school accomplishments unless those things are super relevant for your work. So, for example, if you are. So, if you are talking about say hey I won some award being the fastest runner in school when you are looking for a tech role or a consulting role that has got nothing to do with it. But if you have won awards for let us say a school competition that is related to say a certain supply chain problem and it had like x amount of maybe a 100 participants, 1000 participants that becomes okay to call out.

If it is a national level event definitely worth calling out. right if you work been in hackathons if you want something that becomes worthwhile talking about right your entrance exams course i think it's better to let them be i see a lot of people talking about their um i don't know a triple ranks je ranks um those things do not matter you're gonna talk about what you achieved in the the program that you studied so if you studied sciences if you studied arts if you studied engineering you're gonna talk about what did you accomplish at the time that you studied over there And not go dig all the way to your past and try to pull up random entrance exam scores. They are irrelevant. They do not mean anything. They might have meant for you to actually get into certain programs, but they mean nothing for the job market going forward.

Any sort of volunteer and extracurricular activities signify a lot of leadership potential. Volunteer activities especially are really, really well looked after for maybe for consulting, for any sort of managerial roles. It shows that you care for a larger thing than yourself. You care for

communities, you care for the country, for the nation, you care for a certain cause and you are able to step over and beyond your comfort zone to actually make things happen. So, if you have volunteer work, if you have done significant work, you have spent significant time, if you have some things to talk about, please do call it out.

It is a worthwhile thing to talk about and it is something that adds uniqueness to your candidature compared to every other candidate. Again, you do not have the space in a resume, but you do have that in your LinkedIn. All this said and done LinkedIn is about eventually expanding your network. LinkedIn network networking works best if people are within your first and second degree connections. So, more people you know, more people you are connected with, more groups you are connected with that leads you to lot more networking power and what that means is you have access to larger amount of information, you have access to larger connections who can actually be potentially a referrer.

So, we will talk about what that means and how you would actually go ahead expanding your network. Again, all this might not matter if you are looking for on-campus jobs through your team, but there might be dream companies that you are looking for beyond what is available at universities. And secondly, these are things that might be important. They are very important for you once you leave school. So, you may want to think about them as you start embarking on your career journey.

First source of connections are alumni. They are your strongest and best friends out there, other than the friends that you develop in your school. So connect with alumni on LinkedIn. Many of the alumni, especially senior alumni who are in their 50s or beyond, are always looking to give back to the community. They have spent their time.

They've been successful in their careers. They are looking for opportunities where they can help the next generation be successful. So remember, alumni are your best friends. They are in very senior leadership roles. They have the kindness and compassion to actually give back.

So it's a perfect fit. So you need to reach out. You need to have the network with them. right um if if you have a pan university network which is over and beyond just your your college for example iits have things like the pan iit organizations But there are things like universities, organizations that go way beyond just the college that they studied or the small group you are in. It is very good idea to connect to them, right? There is a larger network. The amount of connections they have with you is slightly lower than alumni from your own school. But nevertheless, there is a common connection or a thread that you can pull to actually increase your relevance, okay? Vinod and I are always open to connect.

We have also opened up our connections such that anyone connected to us can access our connections. Please use us as a good referral point to actually or connect with us and then connect with the connections we have. So use it as a good way to go forward. And it's not just us. There are a lot of people from the industry who are actually in the same position.

They are very senior in their roles. They're looking to give back to the community. Please connect, talk about your interest, leverage them to actually open up your network and reach out to more people and get more valuable value after this whole process. Again, a quick note, do not send blank invites. Nobody knows who you are unless you spell out what is the purpose of the connection. Say, hey, I have been following your posts and I really like these thoughts and therefore, I want to connect with you.

Hey, we are from the same school. We went to the same college. We live in the same, we probably worked in the same place. I would like to connect with you to know more about your industry. be a little bit like spend some time trying to develop that relationship right do not just send hey connect click button right that that does nobody any good groups are a are under utilized resource so linkedin has something called the groups you can go and search and within that you can filter for the groups that are are relevant for you so for example there may be things related to hr community there may be things related to product management in fact when i was when i was in us looking for product management roles One of the things that I noticed is some of my friends had very good calls from companies despite them not having the background and quickly I realized that they were actually connected on LinkedIn to some of these product management groups and consequently had awareness of opportunities that opened up in the group. So, these group connections may not lead to direct referrals, they might need you to have an understanding of things that are in the industry, but remember information is power. So, more you know, more you are connected, more you are aware of events, you can start leveraging them to be of value to you.

Similarly, groups once you are connected, lets you engage with the community. And once there is a strong engagement, if there is a connection between certain individuals That is a natural way to take that conversation forward. So, remember groups is something that is undervalued, under known, but there is a lot of potential to actually increase your network if you do it the right way. A few other tips to actually note this specifically for students if you are looking for a job please go there I think there is a section called open for jobs open for network or open to work that is available LinkedIn puts a nice banner around it that highlights that the person is actually looking for a for a role also when recruiters search all those who are within the network, who are actually open to network, become the people that they can access. So, if I am a recruiter, so when I was at Amazon and I was hiring a team in San Francisco, we needed 15 engineers to work on a certain specific space.

And to do that, we had asked our recruiters to actually go and search. And we were not getting good quality recruiters. So me and a couple of other engineers were actually searching in our network to find out candidates who are a potential fit. And how the LinkedIn algorithm works is it does a search within your network. It also does a search within the groups and the associations you're connected with. So remember, more groups you're connected, there's a higher chance you will connect with individuals.

and it and the you and the linkedin algorithm optimizes for individuals who are actually looking to work so those those people pop up right in the top of the filter so this helps people actually identify the right candidates whether you're hiring manager or recruiter this this becomes a very easy tool to actually find the candidates and and consequently call them over for for interview or screen them for a for a for a role okay again more on it just remember put a post such that when you are when you click on open to work when you put it as a post it gets circulated in your network if you add a custom note then people know what to do with it lot of your contacts might be willing to repost telling hey this particular candidate is someone i know if there are jobs that please go ahead and look look for this candidate right so it's free advertising and publicity that you can get use them to your advantage Remember that LinkedIn has a is a network and it is a professional network. So, you are you are in you are in it to actually get a favor from someone else. So, if someone does not respond immediately that is perfectly fine they might have something happening, but if someone has sent a message to you

be polite and respond as soon as possible that shows your prompt you are also active and you are actually ready to engage right. be always professional, be polite, be kind.

So, these are key things to look forward. A small note here, I think it is worth calling out. There was a student who we were mentoring here at IIT Palakkad. who actually reached out on linkedin to um vp of a corporate strategy right it was a it was a someone very high in the organization of a very well-known company uh she reached out um that connection worked out really well the person actually invited the student who was a engineering student in a non-finance background and engineering in a non-finance background to actually come out for a for a discussion so they had a couple of discussions that networking went really well and the student actually got a pre-placement offer from that big company working in a corporate strategy team. Now, corporate strategy if people know is something that is generally something that is open only for MBA candidates.

So, the point of this story is that networking opens up doors if done right. and if done with respect. So, use this as a potential way for you to grow your career, remember there is lot more out there than you can imagine. If you think you are an engineer, traditionally you would not get into roles that you think is out of your vision, but by the right network and leveraging your right skills, you will be able to get open up these doors.

With that we will end this session today. Thanks all, hope you all do well. Cheers.