



THE STARTUP PRIMER



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THE BASICS

At Uncubed, we equip you with the skills, insight, and experiences you need to get a job and succeed at today's most innovative startups.

In this guide, we'll provide you with an overview of key skills at any startup job: growing an audience, creating products and learning the tech stack. Then we'll walk you through the steps to landing a startup job.

Sound good? Here's what you need to know to get started.

BRING IDEAS

Get comfortable thinking creatively about your work, and sharing your ideas with your team. It may be the first time anyone else has heard your particular perspective, so don't assume it's already been considered.

OVER-COMMUNICATE

If you're working with a small team, it is imperative to keep everyone in the loop. Get in the habit of communicating about potential problems so your team can help you solve them before they happen. And learn how and when to say "no".

USE YOUR SECONDARY SKILLS

You'll get to wear more than one hat. So think about the things you like to do that would traditionally fall outside of your job responsibility, and be prepared to take ownership and pitch in.



What's next? Watch the [5 SKILLS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED](#) at a startup from Pesh Kanthan, VP of Data Science at Mediamorph.

LEARN THE LINGO

Like any industry or culture, the startup world is full of lingo.

AGILE

The term originated as a software development methodology but has been more broadly applied to startups that can react quickly to the market on all fronts, not just in terms of programming.

PIVOT

The moment when a lean startup halts what it was doing in order to test a brand new hypothesis. If it works, the business is then built around this new hypothesis.

KPIs

Key Performance Indicators are designed to evaluate success and drive long-term results and are more common at large startups. They're part of a goal-tracking system that involves setting targets, measuring results against those targets.

FIND THE RIGHT ONE

A lot of startups are great—but not all will be a great fit.

SKIP THE BLIND DATES

Really, really do your homework on each company before meeting or applying for a job with them. Aggressively Google. Scour their websites, blogs, social media presences, and articles written about them (or by their team members).

DON'T FORGET TO TIP

Having the awareness and initiative to suggest an improvement or feature during an interview or conversation can go a long way. Do keep in mind they may already be working on something similar, and be careful that you're not too presumptive in presenting your suggestion.



LEARN 21 MORE NON-BUZZWORD STARTUP TERMS from Chris Johnson, CEO and Co-Founder of Uncubed.

HOW TO GROW AN AUDIENCE

Marketing and audience growth boil down to a series of efforts to get in touch with the people whom you want to know about your company or product, and getting them on board.



First things first, learn [HOW TO CRAFT THE PERFECT PITCH FOR YOUR STARTUP](#) with the CEO of PivotDesk.

1. STRATEGY

It helps to understand the industry landscape and decide how you will differentiate yourself from other companies. Think about the mindset of the consumer: how do you want them to feel about your product or company?

2. CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Start by turning your final strategy into a brief. Then, begin the process of conceptualizing the whole campaign and what it will look like. Focus on what feels right and what will make the most impact.

3. EXECUTION

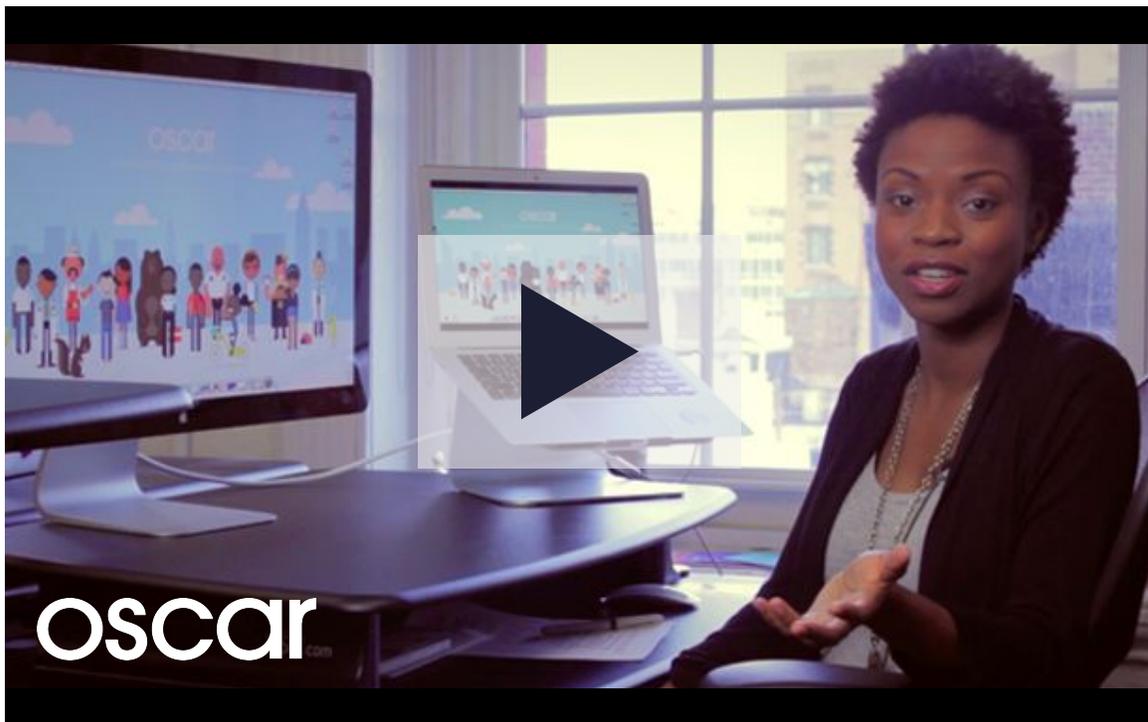
During this phase, you'll send all of your hard work out into the universe through various mediums: online banner ads, social media channels, TV commercials, billboards, marketing emails, etc.

4. MEASURING SUCCESS

Measuring the direct impact of certain things, like subway ads, can be difficult, but measuring digital efforts is easier with online tools such as Google Analytics. By asking people to tell you where they heard about your company, you can begin to get a sense of where your audience heard about you.

MAKING HEALTH INSURANCE INTERESTING.

One of the best ways to raise awareness in a highly competitive and cluttered category like health insurance is mass advertising. Walk through the four main steps of a marketing campaign with former Vice President of Marketing at Oscar Health, Veronica Parker-Hahn.



WATCH: 4 KEYS TO A LARGE SCALE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

MASTER GROWTH HACKING

Growth hacking is the buzziest of buzz words, but also incredibly effective.

Content marketing, a major component of growth hacking, is a sure-fire way to get started.

DATA-DRIVEN CONTENT

Dig into the basics of your analytics to understand what is performing the best. Then rinse and repeat. You want your audience to come back, share, and advocate for your content. Start building an understanding of how your audience interacts with your content, and what specifically is compelling to them..



ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Introducing new content to the internet goes a long way. If you're conducting meaningful research and sharing the results, it positions your brand as the thought leader. This can be as simple as surveying your current audience about their domain expertise.



A/B TESTING

An oldie, but a goodie. Editorial instinct can only take you so far. And even if your instinct is right, it's good to have data to back it up. Famous content sites, like *Huffington Post*, or *The Onion* are built on the back of A/B (and C/D/E...) testing headlines and content.



In this video, learn the clever tactics Contently used to **GROW THEIR AUDIENCE BY 500%**

EMERSON SPARTZ KNOWS VIRAL CONTENT.

He created the massively popular Harry Potter fan site, Mugglenet.com, when he was just 12 years old. Now, at [Dose](#) (formerly Spartz Media), he's repeated that success again and again—with viral content sites including OMGFacts and GivesMeHope. Click below to watch him explain seven ways to create viral content.



WATCH: 7 WAYS TO
CREATE VIRAL CONTENT

HOW TO CREATE A PRODUCT

Products are the meat of most startups.

They're the app, website, newsletter, or physical thing you send to people. The whole point is to have a great product.

And as it turns out, you can create a great product by making a series of great choices.



Learn

HOW DEVS & DESIGNERS COLLABORATE

to create products with Jeannie Huang, Product Designer & Jackie Balzer, Head of FrontEnd Development at Behance (Adobe).

1. UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

Talk to your audience (or potential audience) to make sure 1) there is a problem, and 2) it's something you're solving.

2. DESIGN A SOLUTION

Start designing in low fidelity, with a rough idea so you can get a sense of flow and basic interactions.

3. PROTOTYPE THE SOLUTION

Start adding design and content elements in Sketch or a similar tool.

4. TEST

Start with just a few people and have a plan. Come up with a list of questions you want answered, and assumptions you want to validate.

5. FEEDBACK

Review the results of the tests with your team to understand feedback from multiple angles.

6. DEFINE KPIS

You want to know your criteria for success so you know when a solution is or isn't working.

7. ITERATE

Send your product into the wild, and take what you learn back to step one.

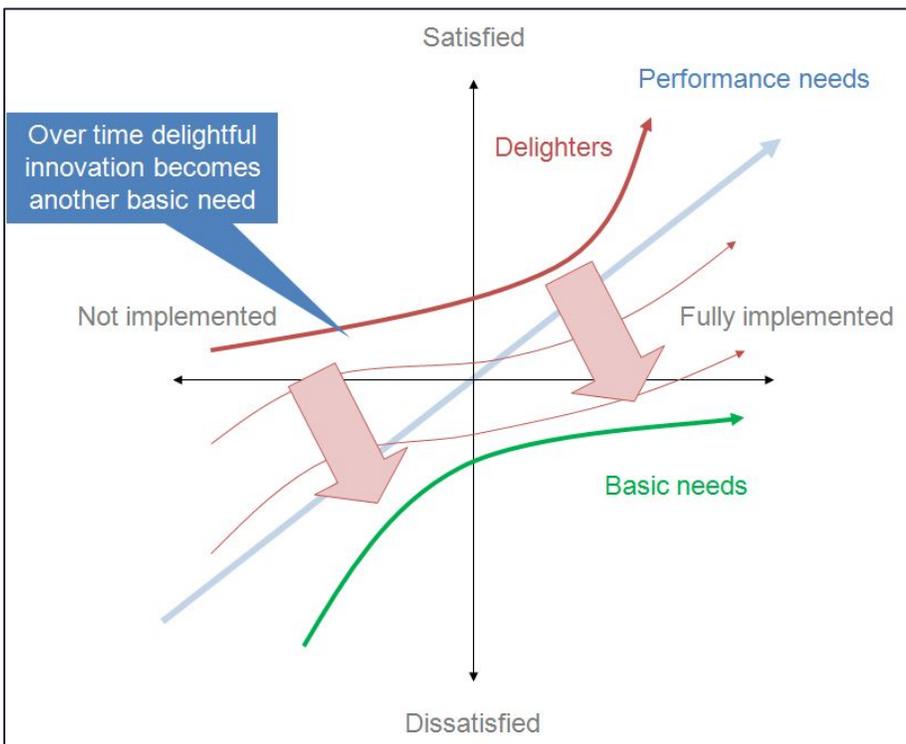
THE KANO MODEL

When you're trying to choose which features to develop next, the Kano Model is an excellent place to start.

THE KANO MODEL

The Kano Model breaks features up into categories to help you decide which are the most urgent to develop, based on the combined total of provided functionality and user satisfaction.

▶ Watch Product Manager Quan Duong from Grindr explain **HOW THEY EVALUATE PRODUCT FEATURES** using the Kano Model.



FEATURE CATEGORIES

- One-dimensional
- Attractive
- Basic
- Indifferent
- Reverse

INTRO TO THE TECH STACK

Many people work in tech without holding a strictly technical job (like a developer or an engineer). No matter which role you end up in, a general literacy of technical language is helpful.

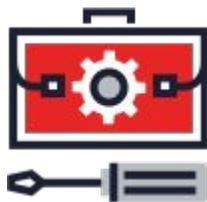
The first step is learning about the tech stack, whether you're looking to develop literacy, or become a full-time developer.



FRONT-END

This is what goes on in the browser (like Safari or Chrome), including how pages are laid out, how they're rendered, and any kind of user interactions.

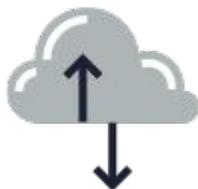
- Languages to know about: HTML, CSS, and JavaScript



BACK-END

This is what happens on the servers, and how information gets from the servers to you.

- Languages to know about: Ruby, Python, and Java



DATABASE

This is how you store the data, like information about users.

- Languages to know about: SQL, NoSQL

DEV BOOTCAMP PIONEERED THE IMMERSIVE “BOOTCAMP” MODEL.

Whether you're thinking about becoming a developer, or just interested in understanding the tech you use everyday, it's great to develop tech literacy. Below, Dev Bootcamp instructor Steven Cassidy explains the three major components you'll hear about in web development.

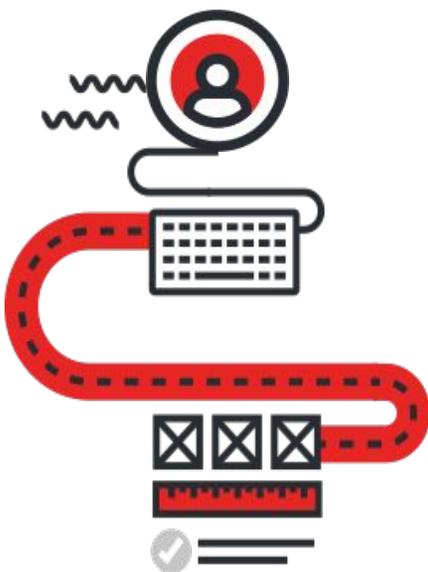


HOW TO BE TECH
LITERATE

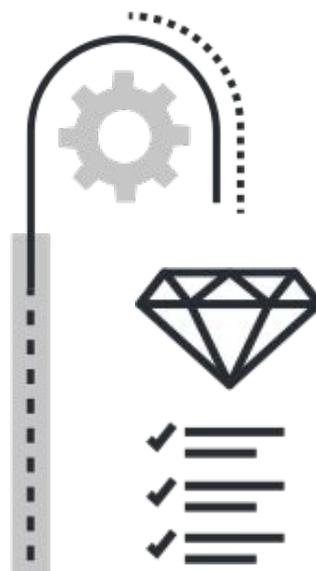
HOW TO LAND A STARTUP JOB

For the final chapter, here are three tactics to get you started on your startup job applications:

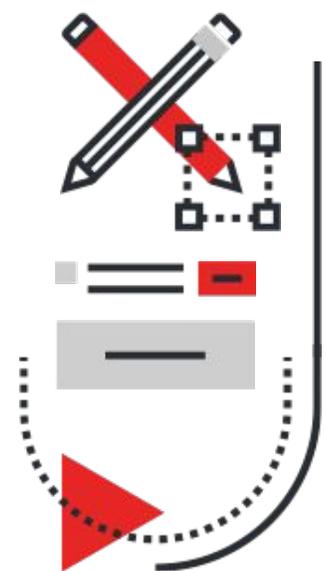
1. BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND



2. PREPARE AN EFFECTIVE RESUME



3. WRITE A CONVINCING COVER LETTER



1. BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND

If you want to work in tech, it's smart to have a robust online presence. That all starts with owning your name on the internet.

GOOGLE YOURSELF

You want to make sure people can find you on the internet. Start by searching your own name to get a sense of what someone would find if they went looking today. Ideally, your primary internet presence is one, if not all, of the first few results.

CHOOSE YOUR NAME

If you don't already rank high when searching your own name, it may be because someone else with a similar name has a massive internet presence. Sometimes you can make moves to outrank them, but if your name is something like Brian Williams, you should consider adding a middle name or initial—and using that as your full name across the internet.

Tools like DomainTyper can help you get a sense of what domain names are available using your name. It's best to have the .com. You'll also want to secure your name as a handle on all major social sites.

CHOOSE KEYWORDS

You've probably seen bios listing a million descriptors (Nerd, Writer, Mom, Vegetarian, Londoner, and on and on forever). It's an effective way to describe who you are in a small amount of space. But, it's even better if you can narrow your description down to one or two things.

They don't have to be all-encompassing of you as a human, but should describe the most important things you want to be known for. Once you decide what you want to be known for, repeat those words everywhere you are on the internet.



Contently Co-Founder Shane Snow has 170K LinkedIn followers. Hear him explain **HOW TO BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND.**

2. PREPARE AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

Resumes are your first introduction to a company—and you often have only seconds to make an impression. Pay particular attention to:

KEY PERSONAL INFORMATION

This includes your full name, email, and phone number. Recruiters and hiring managers need to know how to get in touch with you if they want to talk more.

WORK EXPERIENCE

This should be clear and concise. Try to limit yourself to 3 bullet points per job. If you are new to the full-time job market, highlight your internships and volunteer work. If you've been around the block, focus on the last 10 years.

RELEVANT EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

Particularly in startup companies, recruiters and hiring managers want to get a sense for what you care about. And they want to know that you are excited about the space and the job responsibilities. This can even be information about relevant Meetups or similar networking groups you're a member of.

EDUCATION

Not everyone goes to college. That's totally fine. If you attended, list the school, program, and year.

DESIGN

The most important thing is that your resume is readable. White space is your friend. Choose clean fonts and limit color.



Watch the [FIRST 5 THINGS A RECRUITER SEES ON YOUR RESUME](#) with Ash Hogan from Intent Media.

3. WRITE A CONVINCING COVER LETTER

Your cover letter is an opportunity to stand out.

GREETING

Find out who is in charge of hiring, or who is in charge of the role, and address it to them directly. Most companies have employees listed on their website. Otherwise spend some time on LinkedIn. Do not assume gender based off name alone, and do not start with “Dear Hiring Manager”.



LENGTH

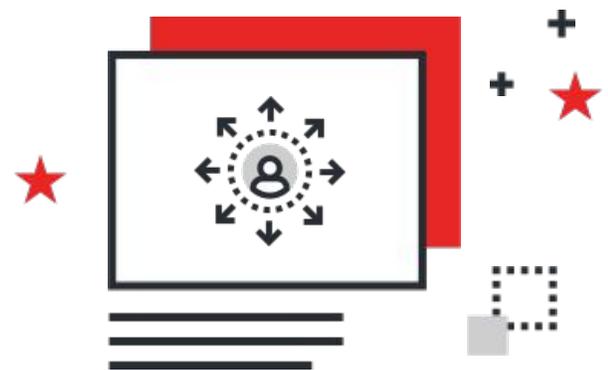
You usually don’t need more than two to three paragraphs. Keep it short and to the point.



CONTENT

This is where you contextualize your resume. Reinforce your strengths, and reaffirm your skills relating to key requirements in the job posting.

Use your judgment here, and match the tone of the company as a whole. You don’t need to be super formal when applying to many startups.



Click here to learn why **THE BEST COVER LETTER IS CUSTOMIZED** with Dan Geiger, Recruiter at BuzzFeed.

READY FOR MORE?

Learn new skills, strategies, and tips
from today's most innovative startups
and tech giants on Uncubed.

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