

Lead with Your Story: How These Industry Giants Got their Dream Jobs

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(L-R) Wendy Glavin, Andrew Wang and Estie Rand

You've probably heard of Meetup. If not, there are Meetup events for anything that interests you. Whether it's to meet new people, make connections, help others or learn, Meetups are local, national and global.

On Thursday, September 19, 2019, I participated in the LinkedIn Global event at Bell Works in New Jersey hosted by Joel Wolh, Brian Wallace and others. LinkedIn Global was launched in August, 2018. There were roughly 1,000+ attendees at the event.

How to Design an Unforgettable Event

I've attended hundreds or possibly thousands of events but

this one is one of my top picks. Why? First, the location. Thousands of people meandered about the iconic, self-contained modern metropolis. The VIP event was outdoors on its roof deck overlooking Zen Lake with umbrella tables, benches, both buffet food, a bar and other areas to lounge in the sun.

I attended with my colleague and friend, Andy Wang host of Inspired Money and Managing Partner at Runnymede Capital Management. Andy and I met through Deirdre Breakenridge several years ago and some of my clients (and me ☐) were guests on Andy's podcast. We'd never met before.

After hours of networking and connecting, we attended the interactive round-table Influencer conversation which was filmed on LinkedIn Live. The guests' background stories were interesting, particularly the only entrepreneur in 11-years of Shark Tank history to ever sit on both sides. Now, he's Daymond Johns right-hand man.

LinkedIn Global Business Panel

Next, we attended the first panel discussion about LinkedIn Business moderated by Loralyn Mears, Weekend Freelance Journalist at Grit Daily. The panelists were Maribel Lara, Senior Vice President and Head of Consulting at The Sasha Group, A VaynerX Company, John Marty, Senior Project Manager at Amazon and Paul Ghermezian, General Partner of T5 Capital and Consultant to American Dream and Mall of America.

Loralyn started the conversation with, "What shaped you? What experiences have you had with LinkedIn?"

Maribel: You can see the common thread when you look back. I always loved helping people. But, life was tough. I lived in the projects and ended up attending a predominately white university. I went for my MBA and was a caregiver to my father. Then, I worked one-on-one with students.

I went from non-profit to business, social media and

marketing. I created content and built my brand using LinkedIn. When I was recruited by VaynerMedia, I didn't know who Gary was, certainly not the "personality" he is today. What struck me was his empathy. I said that I couldn't devote 100 percent of my time to work. Gary understood and enabled me to do my job while managing my personal obligations.

Gary is amazing to work for and Sasha Group is the latest venture. We're teaching small businesses how to grow. It's important to bring your entire self to the organization and to always put culture first. You must tell your story.

John: I had a failed start-up and was broke. I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I had a home and car audio business with no products to sell. I ate canned beans for \$1.00 to save money. It was a stressful time and I had no self-esteem. I kept thinking, what's wrong with me?

I had zero job prospects and applied to over 150 companies and didn't get hired. I spent quite a bit of time reinventing myself and learning a lot of new things in the hopes of getting a job.

Looking back, in January 2018, I answered a question on Quora, "Does being on LinkedIn really help you get hired?" I took it upon myself to answer this question. Within four days, I received 100,000 views and 600 up votes. In summary, I said that LinkedIn or having a LinkedIn profile completely changed my life.

Nearly three years ago, I landed an awesome job at Amazon. The recruiter reached out to me out of the blue... I didn't call her. When she reached out, I asked how? She said, LinkedIn. And so, having a LinkedIn profile is extremely powerful. It enabled me to flip the traditional model of applying and hoping that a company is going to call, to recruiters flooding my profile and hitting me up asking if I'm interested in coming to work for the companies they represent.

I was working for American Express when I was recruited to work at Amazon.

I learned that our job titles don't define us. If we lead with our story people will connect.

Paul: American Dream is a long project. There are inherent assumptions when you grow up in a family business. It started in a dorm room when I saw a blurb in an industry magazine. I believed in it. I put together a billion-dollar proposal at Kinko's. I called my cousins to come help me. That's how it started. At the end of the day you must be passionate and hustle.

After, we hired 800 people from LinkedIn just for one project. Then, thousands of people for the Mall of America, West Mall in Toronto, and the latest iteration is in the Meadowlands.

We've announced we're going to open the doors on October 25th. All the people play an immense role. Getting there wasn't easy. I failed at that young age. Doing it is one thing, but patience is another.

It's important to connect with my team globally. Now, LinkedIn is a representation of who you are and how you contribute. Your personal brand is crucial.



(L-R) Moderator Loralyn Mears, Maribel Lara, John Marty, Paul Ghermezian

One Tip for Using LinkedIn

Loralyn: We forget there are struggles behind these influencer's stories. What's one tip you can provide for readers?

Maribel: Ask for recommendations.

John: Learn how to create your personal brand. You may be misaligned with your job. Our brand changes over time.

Paul: Just do it. Sit back and think about how I am being viewed on LinkedIn, work and in other places. It doesn't have to be complicated.

How to Build (or Rebuild) Your Self-Esteem?

Loralyn: How did you all gain the confidence to succeed?

Maribel: Keep reminding yourself of what you've achieved.

John: LinkedIn and YouTube helped me.

Paul: When you're presented with an opportunity, break out of your comfort zone. Have great people around you like a partner, spouse, friend or mentor. Mentors give perspective.

What If You Don't Have the Time to Spend?

Loralyn: People say they're too busy and can't afford to focus their attention to LinkedIn.

Maribel: Cut one streaming show.

John: Too many posts can have the opposite effect. Two or three is enough.

Paul: Don't spam people.

With so many ways to connect it's tough to manage posting and sharing on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and other social media platforms. Then, there's responding to people in a timely manner via email, text, messenger, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts, Telegram, Skype and more. But, that's the world we created and live in.

If you want to stay relevant and ahead of business and industry trends, you have no choice but to learn how to use these tools to connect and build your personal brand and community; one post, one tweet, one video, one online meeting, and one event at a time.

The more you learn to operate in this way, the easier it gets and soon it will become second-nature. The speakers were honest and transparent about their missteps, taking risks and persevering through the tough times while continuing to learn.

Please take their advice and mine and you'll soon view these

as opportunities to meet, help, speak to others anywhere and learn new things.



About the Author: Wendy Glavin is a 30-year veteran and Founder and CEO of Wendy Glavin Agency in New York City, offering marketing, PR, executive writing and social media. Her specialties include blockchain, cryptocurrency, AI, FinTech and working with B2B2C technology start-ups. Her website

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