# LINK

## Become a Local Anywhere

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### OVERVIEW

Link is a unique social platform that aims to provide  value to its customers by promoting social interaction and group get-togethers. We offer a consolidated platform, similar to the likes of Facebook, Google Maps, and Yelp Advertising, by allowing individuals, groups, and businesses of all sizes to promote, attend, and plan or chat about events in the area.

### THE PROBLEM

Although there are currently platforms that people may post and find events on, these events can be confusing to sort through, and are often buried by the reviews of more popular events. Individuals, small groups, and small businesses can often lack a platform where they can successfully advertise their free events to the general community. This may create  a sense of disconnect from the community, as people are unaware of events going on around them. There is also an issue of the decline of social interaction due to things like social media and the COVID-19 pandemic. Adolescents and college-aged students who reported the most loneliness also reported that they have low in-person social interaction and high social media use (Twenge).

### THE SOLUTION

Our platform provides a unique solution to bring awareness to the local available communities, events, activities and experiences. By providing this solution, Link simultaneously seeks to increase the conversion rate of online social interaction and online communities to real world face-to-face interaction. The platform offers an interface that allows our users to easily view and search for activities, events, communities, and experiences in their general areas of San Diego county. Users and organizers will be able to  interact with each other online in a way that has been previously inconvenient and inefficient due to the overwhelming platforms, search engines, and other resources (e.g. flyers, information boards, emails, etc) that do not efficiently consolidate and or curate information.

### OUR USERS & CUSTOMERS

Our user-base are individuals who want to attend events in their local area and have the opportunity to promote them. We target younger adults aged 18-24 who live in or around a major city. Unlike Facebook who's median user age is 31 years old, we hope to reach a younger

community, one that has been hit with social isolation like no other. Our everyday user is someone seeking events and activities whether they are new to the area or an existing resident. Similar to Google where you can find things like restaurants, bars, and hiking trails, Link offers users the capabilities to find live events happening at those locations (i.e. Taco Tuesday, Buy 1 Drink, Get 1 50% off, Live Singer from 8pm -11pm, etc.)

We also offer promotional listings and advertisements for groups, businesses, and other event planners. These customers can utilize our platform to advertise their 'live' events to our users and gain more exposure to potential attendees.

## Timing & Market Opportunity

According to Pew Research Center, around 70% of Americans utilize "social media to connect with one another, engage with news content, share information, and entertain themselves" ("Social Media Fact Sheet"). We here at Link believe that it is a great time to enter into the social networking market, as it has reached a market value of $39.7 Billion as of 2021 and is expected to have a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23.4% (*Social Networking App Market Size Report, 2028)*. We also believe that the timing right now is great for Link due to the vast social isolation that the world has experienced from 2020 into 2022. According to research, individuals who are disconnected from others are roughly 3x more likely to die than those with strong social ties (Brody). We truly value the importance of social interaction from both a health and social standpoint, and we believe that it is core to advancing and sustaining a healthy society.

We will have a focus initially set in the San Diego market targeting young individuals 18-25 and up to 35 years of age with a specific target market of college students and young professionals who are more inclined to social media use, creating groups and hosting events via a social networking platform. The total population of students in San Diego is about 211,000 (datausa.io). We estimate we would be able to obtain about 40% of college students and have at least 10% of our user base purchase the premium subscription.

## Competitor Analysis

Our major competitor is Eventbrite, an event management and ticketing platform. Their revenue model is built on charging a small transaction fee for event organizers in exchange for online ticketing services. In the app or on the website, users are allowed to search, create, and or promote local events. Eventbrite has a total of $249 million in revenue for 2022 (Forbes).

Eventbrite's platform is to almost solely provide event search and management services from which their revenue model is based on – taking percentage cuts from ticket sales. Evenbrite loses on the interactivity between users, as well as organizers that would otherwise increase retention/usage rate on the app and lead to more sales, data collection, subscription justification and there is a lack of ability to communicate and plan with friends and others that the user  may be interested in attending or planning an activity or event.

## To Market

**Phase 1:** Reaching our target persona: the adventurous, ambitious, go-getter college student looking to seize every last minute of their time in university.

**Phase 2:** Establishing an on-campus community of Student Ambassadors; set the groundwork for word-of-mouth and community influence marketing to become major players in our future campaigns and marketing goals.

**Phase 3:** Broadening our target persona and expanding our market opportunity: the introverted, never-leaves-their-dorm college crowd who feels very unsure and potentially fearful of new experiences; establish our app as a tool for self-help and personal growth by way of helping people find new passions and interests outside of those they've already become comfortable with.

**Phase 1 Breakdown** – Reaching our Target Persona Market

For the purposes of achieving highly-segmented advertisements to target the quintessential college student tropes, our target persona has been broken down into various unique "student-type" categories.

Phase 1 will focus on on-campus digital and print marketing. Similar to rental bike services that have their own running digital ads on campuses next to the bike charging stations, we will have ads running on digital billboard systems, as well as creating pole/street light banners, flyers to post across campus bulletin boards, and an email campaign at the beginning of the school year offering students a free premium membership for their first quarter/semester of college. This is the pivotal time in a college students' academic career where they begin finding their friends on campus by way of meeting a lot of new people all at once, and the resources offered by premium membership can help this process feel less scary. We want to provide them with the resources they need to find their college friend groups and establish a feeling for the types of activities that they will partake in together.

**Phase 2 Breakdown** – Student Ambassador Program

This phase will take place during the second quarter (from midterms of semester 1 to midterms of semester 2 for schools not on the quarter system). It is here that we begin to establish ourselves as a quintessential part of the college experience. The Student Ambassadors Program will ensure that we don't lose progress in our marketing efforts during the summers in between school years. With the loss of the graduating seniors and the incoming first year and transfer students, we expect app awareness to be at its lowest during the beginning of each school year. The Student Ambassadors Program lays the groundwork for ensuring we keep up momentum and that students will still be hearing about our app and our mission through social media, word-of-mouth, and the influence of their student body throughout holidays and summer breaks.

**Phase 3 Breakdown** - Expanding our target persona and market opportunity

During this phase of the marketing strategy, we are focusing on shifting our brand image to become more wide-reaching. This step is the foundation on which we will expand our market opportunity by broadening the public perception of what our app provides to the market. Not only will LINK be a tool for discovering experiences, but also a tool for self-growth, mental health improvement, and a resource for helping users maintain a healthy life-work balance.

## REVENUE GENERATION

We currently offer two different memberships for our users: ***Standard & Premium***.

***Standard Membership  (Free)***

With the Standard Membership, users are able to utilize our app freely, where they can find live activities in their area based on their interests and connect with their friends in group chats of up to 5 people. Our AI-algorithms will also recommend activities in the area based on the user's interests and their schedule.

***Premium Membership ($4.99/Month)***

With our Premium Membership, individuals and group organizers will be able to promote their own events on the app. They can also share announcements with their followers on upcoming events and connect in group chats of up to 30 people. This membership is tailored more towards event planners, businesses, group organizers looking to promote and post their activities and events.

Aside from membership fees, we also charge vendors a small fee of $0.75 for each ticket that is sold through our platform. We allow all premium users to offer tickets for purchase through their event promotions, and in exchange, we take a small per ticket fee.

We also generate revenue through advertisements, specifically through our promotional listings. Restaurants, small businesses, clubs, and other groups can advertise on our platform if they seek additional promotion and exposure. Users on the standard membership will receive promotional listings and other ads based on their location, interests, and .

## COST DRIVERS

Our main cost drivers are customer acquisition and software development. In order to really drive our revenue we need ample users, both premium and standard. To gain these users, we have developed strategic marketing plans through social media and other mediums. These strategies aim to inform our target market of our app and convert those people into regular users. Also, in order to generate ad revenue, we will need to advertise directly to businesses and organizations that are willing and able to advertise on our platform on a per impression basis.

Another main cost driver for Link, will be our software development. We aim to have AI-integrated software that can give users personalized advertisements based on their likes, interests, and desired area of exploration. This will likely be a large cost driver for us and will take not just capital, but time as well.
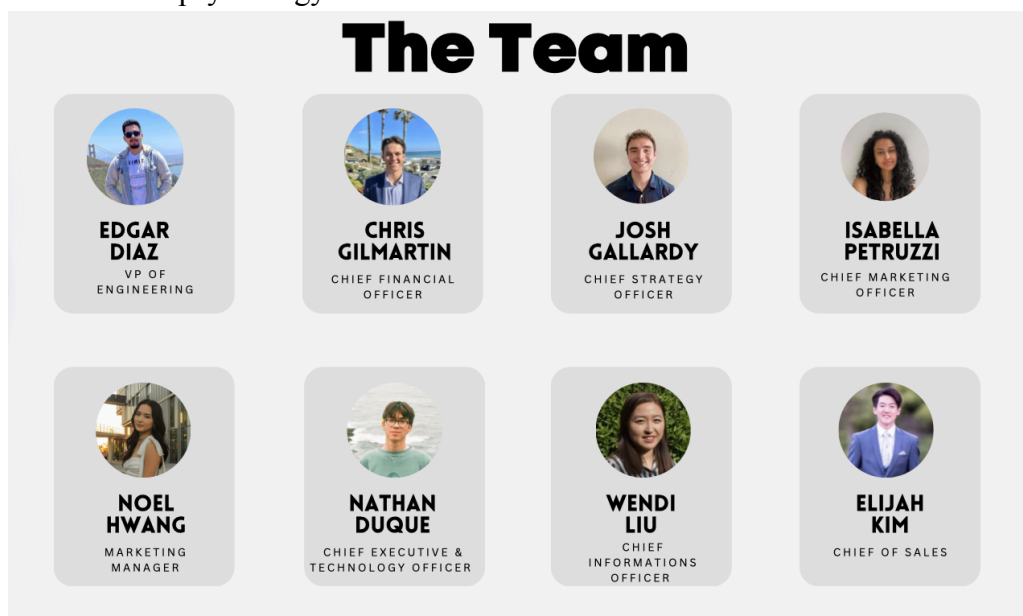
## RISK MANAGEMENT

Given the social nature of our app, we realize the importance of having effective risk management plans in place to protect both the safety of our users and our company. Link is a platform available to any individual, but we are aware that not every user may have the best intentions. Link will include a variety of features to ensure the safety of its user such as a reporting function, to make us aware of any inappropriate or endangering conduct taking place through the app. Users may be flagged for hosting improper events, or may be banned from further events by not conducting themselves appropriately at events that they have attended. Both event hosts and participants will be verified through the app.

However, there are other risks associated with the technical aspects of the company as well. In the case that our servers would crash, making it very difficult for events to take place, we will be equipped with a high quality and experienced IT team to quickly remedy this issue and bring them back online. While the IT works to fix the issue we will send out notifications via email, informing the users of the temporary down time. In addition to this, cyber criminals are a necessary risk to discuss considering the personal information that we will be responsible for protecting. In order to best prevent potential hacks, we have hired a company solely responsible for informing our employees of cyber security policies and software protecting the valuable information of our users.

## OUR TEAM

The team at Link comprises eight diverse entrepreneurial-minded individuals. We have backgrounds in areas such as business, economics, mathematics, cognitive science, computer science, and business psychology.

# The Team

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| **EDGAR DIAZ** VP OF ENGINEERING | **CHRIS GILMARTIN** CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER | **JOSH GALLARDY** CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER | **ISABELLA PETRUZZI** CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER |
| **NOEL HWANG** MARKETING MANAGER | **NATHAN DUQUE** CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TECHNOLOGY OFFICER | **WENDI LIU** CHIEF INFORMATIONS OFFICER | **ELIJAH KIM** CHIEF OF SALES |

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