**Career Advice #82**

**Austin Cumberlander – Coder – Nashville**

**Contact of Winnie Bosibori**

**7 April 2019 post**

**FACEBOOK Post: 16 March 2020**

Career Advice #82 originated out of Nashville, Tennessee when I saw a post made by Austin Cumberlander, a software engineer, within the comments section of one of my contacts, Winnie Bosibori. I should note that Winnie is also a software engineer and resides in Nairobi, Kenya. I had initially connected with Winnie on Twitter in 2018 after following the 100daysofcode group. To be clear, I began following the “100DaysofCode” participants on Twitter in connection with our Blockchain project. As many will recall, the 2017 and 2018 bitcoin and crypto currency craze meant there was a shortage of coders available for Blockchain projects across the globe. In early 2018, I turned to Twitter to start following various coding groups and coding thought leaders in hopes of getting connected with coders for our project. In addition to “100daysofcode”, I also followed Siraj Naval (“free machine learning courses” and his “100daysofMLcode”); free on-line coding courses offered by KhanAcademy, Coursera, Udemy, Udacity and LambaSchool (free 2-year coding degree in exchange for % of future earnings); some excellent coding startups for kids such as CoderDojo and GiraffeAcademy; targeted coding groups and individuals on Twitter including @datacamp, @codeclub, @codenewbies, @codecademy, @freecodecamp, @career\_karma, @girlscodemk, @girlcode\_za, @andela (developing African coders in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and elsewhere).

**Back to School**

On 7 April 2019, I submitted the following within the comments section of the “job search” post that Austin had made and Winnie had “liked”:

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Hi Austin,

I recently posted a response to your fellow Nashvillian (is that a word?) and fellow coder, Hunter Metts, about how such coding talent and creativity should be recognized by CTO’s in the Nashville business community and maybe by the NHL and NFL teams.

However, your profile overview really speaks the language of entrepreneurship that Gary Vaynerchuk talks about in his podcasts. For the past year I have followed many coders in the 100daysofcode on Twitter – such as Winnie, Terry Reynolds, Audrey Delgado, Emmanual, Osamu and Thierno – and in my opinion, you have the necessary drive and determination to create something unique in your coding ventures. Maybe a side gig coding for the Predators or Titans while you build your own amazing app.

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**Grand Ole Opry**

I grew up at a time when Nashville was well known for its country and western singers and less for its coders. Sunday nights usually meant a dose of Barbara Mandrell, Ronnie Milsap, Stompin’ John Conlee or Boxcar Willie and driving in the car to pop in the 8-track tapes to listen to Hank Williams, Reba McEntire or George Strait. Today, Nashville has turned its country music fame to include tech.

Austin Cumberland and I connected on LinkedIn shortly after my post in April; we exchanged ideas and message over the past year but nothing of substance. In my view, Austin’s open post to his connections on LinkedIn in April 2019 appears to be related to his desire to send out “job search” feelers in advance of completing his one-year apprenticeship at the Nashville Software School in August 2019. In fact, he subsequently found a software engineer role with an IT services company in August.

Therefore, I really do not feel that I can provide much towards Austin’s career or professional development. However, I do think it is worth pointing out the tremendous technology innovation that exists in Nashville area that could be of benefit to individuals residing in the Nashville area, including for tech and non-technical personnel. I would provide the following overview:

* • Nashville and area innovation
* • Nashville and area venture capital
* • Angel List in Nashville and area
* • Innovation for coders

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**Nashville funding & innovation**

Since early 2018, I have been following technology investments announced in various tech news feeds: StrictlyVC newsletter (published by Techcrunch editor, Connie Loizos), Crunchbase News, Techcrunch, VentureBeat, UKTN and FinSME’s Inc.

From time to time, Nashville-based companies are represented in such funding announcements; some examples highlighted to end August 2019 included:

CM Group | family of marketing technology companies | https://cmgroup.com

Groups360 | helps business plan out real-world meetings and events | https://groups360.com/

IVX Health | operator of ambulatory infusion centers | https://www.ivxhealth.com/

JumpCrew | acquisition marketing platform | https://jumpcrew.com/

Qualifacts | SaaS-focused electronic health record provider | https://qualifacts.com/

SmileDirectClub | sells at-home teeth straightening systems | https://smiledirectclub.com

Stratasan | healthcare data analytics software provider | https://stratasan.com/

XOi Technologies | provider of field service communication solutions | <http://www.xoi.io/>

NOTE: This is not meant to be a complete list of all Nashville-based tech companies that received funding in months leading up to August 2019. A Google or similar internet search could reveal additional companies available on either the public or private markets.

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**Recent Nashville-based funding**

Funding announcements of Nashville-based companies for the period January to early March 2020 include:

**HealthStream** (Nasdaq: HSTM), a Nashville, Tennessee-based provider of workforce and provider solutions for the healthcare industry, acquired NurseGrid, a Portland, Oregon-based healthcare technology company | FinSME article: <http://bit.ly/3d0AncZ> | <https://www.healthstream.com/> | 12 March 2020

**emids**, a Nashville-based provider of digital engineering and transformation solutions to the healthcare industry, received a strategic equity investment from BlueCross BlueShield Venture Partners | FinSME’s article: <http://bit.ly/2IP85V8> | https://www.emids.com/ | 10 March 2020

**AxialHealthcare**, an eight-year-old, Nashville, Tn.-based healthcare optimization startup focused on substance use issues, has raised $15 million from earlier backers **Oak HC/FT**, **.406 Ventures**, **BlueCross BlueShield VP**, and **Sandbox Advantage Fund**. | https://axialhealthcare.com/| 28 February 2020

**CloudScale365, Inc.**, a Nashville, Tenn.-based global leader of Managed IT Services to businesses worldwide, acquired eApps Hosting, and its Create-a-Cloud platform | FinSME: [http://bit.ly/2QhUPwo](%22) | [https://cloudscale365.com/](%22) | 21 February 2020

Blueprint Title, a three-year-old, Nashville, Tn.-based maker of software tools for real estate transactions, has raised $8.5 million in Series A financing led by Santander Innoventures, with participation from Greycroft, Liberty Mutual Strategic Ventures, Mucker Capital, Tribeca Early Stage Partners, and others | https://blueprinttitle.com/ | 19 February 2020

**CareBridge**, a new, Nashville, Tn.-based long-term care support company formed via the acquisitions of HealthStar and Sinq Technologies, has raised more than $40 million led by **Oak HC/FT,** which was joined by **GV** and other, undisclosed investors. The company will be led by former U.S. Senator **Bill Frist**. The Tennessean article: <http://bit.ly/2Weflld> | <https://www.carebridgehealth.com/> | 13 January 2020

NOTE: As above, this is not meant to be a complete list of all Nashville-based companies that received funding over this period. A Google or similar internet search could reveal additional companies on the market that conducted funding or acquisitions activities over this period.

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**Nashville and area venture capital**

The funding announcements of Tennessee-based entities also make reference to Venture Capital (VC), Private Equity (PE) and other investors that participate in the funding round. Actually, this is true for virtually all funding announcements in the newsletters I follow, not just for Tennessee-based enterprises.

Reviewing the detailed news publications often provides links to the individual company websites – both for the target tech company and the investors. Further information on such companies can also be found in the Crunchbase website (<https://www.crunchbase.com/home>).

In fact, the “Free” section of Crunchbase is generally sufficient to allow a job seeker to find out the names of key management of the tech company, several of their key investors, links to the websites of the tech company and other supporting information such as a list of competitors and companies with similar business activities. In my view, the “Paid” or “Pro” version of Crunchbase is really meant for professionals that seek more in-depth background information to support their work (such as for an investment analyst or stock broker). Of course, Google is a wonderful supplement to find further information on all of the above in the event that one or more of the above sources is lacking.

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***Support over the VC/PE Portfolio***

Senior software engineers and developers with significant experience may open them up to opportunities to IT support roles within the venture capital / private equity firms and/or their portfolio companies. In my view, this could include:

* • Strategic advisor to the VC partners and investment associates assessing the IT readiness of target investments and/or existing portfolio companies
* • Guidance to the VC partners and CEO’s of portfolio investment companies on putting in place SaaS (software-as-a-service) applicable to their operating and back office activities
* • Strategic IT support services to one or more of the individual companies within the VC portfolio

NOTE: There may be other roles or opportunities within such VC/PE entities and/or their portfolio companies that may or may not be publicly announced. As VC’s/PE’s expand, the need will increase for them to hire various support functions to “work across the portfolio” — such as HR, marketing, accounting, IT, legal. This is a growing trend that Stephanie Manning Cohen from Lerer Hippeau, a New York-based venture capital firm, describes in this Forbes article: <http://bit.ly/2vNF9X6>.

**Tennessee-based Venture Capital | Examples**

The following is a selection of VC’s / PE’s based in Tennessee that I compiled from the funding announcements, research on Crunchbase and/or Google search. This is not meant to be a complete list. Google or other search functions may reveal additional VC / PE firms across the State of Tennessee:

Altitude Ventures | http://altvc.com/

Burton Capital Partners | http://www.burtoncap.com/

Claritas Capital | http://www.claritascapital.com/

Cool Springs Capital | http://www.coolspringscapital.com/

Council Capital | http://www.councilcapital.com/

FCA Venture Partners | https://www.fcavp.com

Frist Cressey Ventures | http://www.fcventures.com/

Jumpstart Foundry | https://www.jsf.co

LFM Capital | http://www.lfmcapital.com/

Martin Ventures | http://www.martinventures.com/

Nashville Capital Network | http://nashvillecapital.com/

NueCura Partners | http://www.nuecura.com/

Petra Capital Partners | http://www.petracapital.com/

Relevance Capital | http://www.relevancecapital.com

XMI High Growth Development Fund | http://xmihighgrowth.com/

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**Angel List in Nashville and area**

Link to website | **https://angel.co**

This site is primarily used by tech startups to list tech & non-tech roles. A quick search on the site revealed:

31,300+ startups globally list open roles on the site (NOTE: Includes remote and non-remote roles)

9,500+ across United States

97 open roles in the state of Missouri

65 open roles in the state of Tennessee

43 in the state of Indiana

26 in the state of Kentucky

40 in the city of Nashville

10 in Memphis; a few examples include:

Collectable.com | Fractional ownership of high-end sports memorabilia | https://collectable.com

Indigo | focus on more beneficial agriculture practices | http://www.indigoag.com/

Hamilton Avenue | Holding company for multiple tech start-up subsidiaries in the real estate sector | http://www.hamiltonave.com/

NOTE: I recommend that job seekers consider spending time on the site. Set up their profile. Set search agents. Startups may not always use traditional recruiting sites to find staff. When they scale, they tend to need experienced staff.

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**Innovation for coders**

Turning back to the tech funding announcements, there is a growing trend of software companies creating “coding for coders”. Such companies, and their related platforms, could be of interest to software engineers and developers. The following examples are not meant to be a complete list; I simply compiled this list over the past few months or so. A Google or related search may reveal additional examples of such companies.

**LaunchDarkly** | Oakland, Ca.-based feature management platform for software developers | https://launchdarkly.com/

**Snyk** | London-based company that helps developer secure their code as part of the development | https://snyk.io/

**Thundra** | Boston-based startup that's promising to secure and troubleshoot serverless workloads **| https://thundra.io/**

**Clubhouse** | a project management platform used by software teams | https://clubhouse.io/

**Forest Admin** | Paris-based SaaS startup creating back-of-the-house developer tools to manage customer data and other business operations | https://www.forestadmin.com/

**Hypernet Labs** | Palo Alto, Ca.-based startup whose app expedites code deployment for compute-intensive work like machine learning model training | <https://hypernetwork.io>

**Codacy** | Lisbon, Portugal-based platform that automates and standardizes software quality to increase the efficiency of developers and enterprise development teams | https://www.codacy.com/

**Duda** | SF-based website-building platform for developers | [www.duda.co](https://www.duda.co/)

**Honeycomb** | SF-based startup whose product promises developer teams that they can see production more clearly, so they can resolve issues more quickly | [www.honeycomb.io/](https://www.honeycomb.io/)

**Modulz** | Dublin, Ireland-based startup that helps teams code without writing code | <https://www.modulz.app>

**Gatsby** | Bay Area-based platform that uses web technologies like React and GraphQL to help developers build better sites faster | https://www.gatsbyjs.org/

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END OF RECOMMENDATIONS