

## STEVEN BURDA, LINKEDIN.COM SUPER NETWORKER GIVES US HIS TIPS ON BEING A BETTER NETWORKER



[Steven Burda](#)

Go after your dreams/goals, no matter how SILLY it may sound to others, or what potential risk it may pose. Winners do take risks, and it all starts out with the unknown at first. My advice to young entrepreneurs is to work hard, and not be afraid of the unfamiliar territory ? that is, after all, the success of the entrepreneur.

Another **"something different"** interview from RetireAt21.com - in addition to our main "make money online" audience we also like to feature other young entrepreneurs / young people that most of us will not come across in our day to day surfing the web. Today's interview with Steven Burda - **SUPER NETWORKER** is one such interview. We came across Steven on LinkedIn.com.

In case you did not know LinkedIn.com is an online network of more than 19 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries and Steven just happens to be in the **Top 50 most linked professionals on LinkedIn.com** according to <http://www.toplinked.com/top50.html>

**Hi Steven**

First off - thank you for agreeing to this interview - we know you are busy and appreciate you taking the time out to answer our questions.

**Can we start with a little background information - Where you live? How old you are? What motivates you? Inspires you?**

My name is Steven Burda and I am 26 years old. I was born in Ukraine (former part of Soviet Union) but immigrated to United States (Philadelphia) with my family back in the early nineties. Right now, I live in King of Prussia, a suburb of Philadelphia, and work for a Fortune500 company just miles down the road. There are lots of things that motivate and inspire me – but if I had to pick just one thing, it's primarily my extraordinary drive of learning. I love being the learning "sponge" no matter where I am – in school, at work, on vacation, in front of Jeopardy! TV-game show episode, or even browsing profiles and Answers section on LinkedIn. I am a self starter, highly motivated, energetic, and result oriented -- yet cooperative and a team player as well. I am a good communicator and can help others focus on goals and motivate them to attain them. I'm persuasive, but I also have good listening skills. Because of my interests of all aspects of existence, be it related to business or not, I crave knowledge and learning... and it makes life so much more interesting and fulfilling. ...and my life is so worth living!

*Our Main Questions:*

**1) Reading about you online, I have seen you described as both a Young Entrepreneur and a**

**Senior Financial Analyst. Also you are one of the Top 50 most-connected LinkedIn's users, according to TopLinked.com. And of course you have also had the time to get an MBA.**

**That is a lot of "achievement" for such a young age, tell me, how do you describe yourself? As an entrepreneur, as a Financial Analyst, as a Networker or as someone with an MBA? How do all of these combine to be Steven Burda?**

First of all, thank you for the kind words and taking the time to review and read-up on my background. I am who I am: just a regular guy that just happens to be intertwined with all the characteristics you mention above. My undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as couple of internship experiences, were in Finance, Economics and Management – a thing that I am trained to do and enjoy doing (and get paid for!) My MBA (and even Post-MBA) is my theoretical addition to my preestablished experience I have gained over the last several years that is improving and building-on my current profession. I am a Senior Financial Analyst, and have worked in such capacity for few years now. Right now, I report directly to CFO, and I love it. He's a competent individual, demanding and well informed – and I learn from his mannerism and skills, and apply his wisdom to my own work and every-day life. In terms of Networking, well, that thing comes natural to me. I guess I've been doing networking all my life, ever since the early childhood days, and to me it as easy as eating and breathing. A component of my persona is that I am attracted to smart/intelligent/interesting/witty people from all walks of life – for both professional and personal interaction and stimulation – and that makes me, what others call, a "great networker." Being featured on TopLinked.com, as one of the most connected people in the world is nice, but I am not after the "ranking board"...

I have a dynamic and entrepreneurial mind-set and over the last months have helped various start-up companies, including MyWorkster.com, to get up and running. In the midst of it all, just last month I have founded Burda Consulting Co., a non-profit consulting company with a mission to help small corporations, groups or individuals on various issues, based on my personal/professional experiences and education. So, who is "Steven Burda" to you?

**2) Do you have a Mentor or a favorite Motivational Speaker or Self Help Guru? Is there anyone in particular that you model yourself on?**

At the present, to be honest, not really. Over the last decade or two, I had many people who I looked up to, listened to and got advice from. Of course, it is my parents who taught me a lot in life and I am very much grateful for that. My sister and other family members, from whom I learned the "hard knocks" of life. My teachers and professors, who gave me the determination to do my best and always pushed me to go to the top. My managers and coworkers, who were always there for me, and gave me constructive criticism and some earned praise. And then there were the public figures and combination of other people I read about and saw on TV (such as Jack Walsh, Malcolm Gladwell, Dale Carnegie, Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey just to name a few) that gave me much motivation, encouragement, direction and purpose. Finally, of course, my wife who stands by me through all circumstances, was and is a great life companion, listener, supporter and above all my best friend in everything that touches my (our) lives.

**3) What would be the two top pieces of personal or networking advice that you would give to young entrepreneurs in 2008? Is there any particular advice you might give to someone who wants to run their own business - young entrepreneurs?**

This is an easy question.

**One:** Go after your dreams/goals, no matter how "silly" it may sound to others, or what potential risk it

may pose. Winners do take risks, and it all starts out with the "unknown" at first. My advice to young entrepreneurs is to work hard, and not be afraid of the "unfamiliar territory" – that is, after all, the success of the entrepreneur.

**Two:** Network, Network, Network! In this day and age, the young generation is using Facebook and MySpace to keep up with friends and classmates, but face-to-face networking, and even virtual sites like LinkedIn, will bring a wave of opportunities. After all, think about your friends that you met by "chance" – at a party you didn't think on going to, in class you didn't want to register for, or at internship/work you almost declined an offer to. Connect, network and establish meaningful relationship with "strangers" now and you'll be grateful later – be it your own business you're starting, or working in the corporate environment. It had worked for me, and WILL defiantly work for you... just remember, in networking, you absolutely ought to "dig your well before you're thirsty"

#### **4) What is the best advice you have ever been given?**

Oh there were so many advices that benefited me... but one, as you probably heard before, is simple: "Treat people how they want to be treated." In both professional and personal life, many times treating people how you want to be treated doesn't suit well, so treat them how they want to be treated works best. I had received other wonderful advices in my past, and would be more than happy to share with you if you contact me :)

#### **5) Normally in our interviews we ask if someone considers Entrepreneurs are born or if they learn to be entrepreneurs. In your case, can we ask if Networkers are born or is it a skill that has to be learned?**

It's a hard question to answer because there are many variables that come into play... but I think that background, upbringing, education, culture, environment, profession, and self-desire and enthusiasm all contribute to being a networker. For one, Networking should not be a task... should not be something you have to do, but rather that you want to do.... But networking should be something one enjoys doing. If you have no passion for it, you will fail at it.

#### **6) Apart from your amazing profile on LinkedIn - are you a natural Networker in other aspects of life - face to face meetings? Do you have any top tips for face to face meetings (For example at a business breakfast meeting?) and also tips for growing your Network on LinkedIn?**

Of course I am a natural Networker in other aspects of life, such as face-to-face meetings. I love meeting and conversing with people... on any subject, on any debate, on any problem or issue. A stereotype of someone who works with numbers may be that he or she is a nerd, or a geek, and all that he/she does is working with spreadsheets and calculators – but for me, getting out there and talking to people gets me get the analysis done, and helps me both (again!) professionally and personally in my development and growth.

I love being challenged, and seeing other people's point of view, and communicating to them, gets me all excited and hyped up! In terms of growing the network on LinkedIn: well, get out and connect to people in your industry, in your region, in your school! Post answers to questions, and just simply be active. Just remember – anything you do online is written in stone, so be careful what you say or who you say it to. Oh, and do connect to well-connected people there. One day, perhaps, they can help you in a way you never thought possible...

#### **7) I may be wrong, but reading about you, I get impression that you have "nothing to sell" - that you Network for the fun of it? Is this really true? What is your "agenda" in Networking,**

**both online and offline?**

That's right – it is true. I don't sell products. I am not a recruiter. I have been doing it as a passion for learning and development (you know, since I already mentioned that). To me, I do it for fun on my own free time, be it after work, in the evenings, or over weekends. My "agenda" is just to be myself and enjoy what I've been enjoying for the past several years of my LinkedIn membership existence. Some people may think that because I'm not selling anything, or not looking for anything specific per se on LinkedIn... then I am wasting my time. To them, I say: "The time I enjoy wasting is not wasted time." My established human-capital network, and my own intellectual capital I expanded is tremendous – can you really put a price on this? No, it is invaluable to me...

**8) If you were starting over again at LinkedIn, is there anything you would have done differently - knowing what you know now?**

No. Ok, maybe one things. At first, in the very beginning, I tried to connect to "everyone from everywhere" but then I got blocked by LinkedIn within weeks from sending any more invitations. So, as an advice to apprentice members out there, be selective, read the profile of a person you thinking of connecting to, and send an InMail or Introduction first... and if they are willing to accept, follow up with an Invitation.

**9) Have you any plans (personal or business) that you can share with us about your future plans / goals / lifetime goals?**

Like most happy and successful people, I do have plans and goals. But I have both short-term and long-term goals. Short term: To wake up in the morning and feel good about what I will achieve during the day ahead. To meet new challenges with confidence in my ability, and to have respect for my fellow coworkers, and always give 100%. Some people try to prove themselves to someone else, but I believe it is better to prove to yourself that you can succeed. No one is a better judge of your success than you, and you know what you can do. When I do a job well, it gives me a personal satisfaction that carries over to everything else I do. Long term: To become someone who is influential and would make a difference in this world, and at the same time to become someone with a wonderful mixture of a great career, and a fantastic relationship with family, friends and colleagues. As the saying goes, **"Find a job that you love and you won't have to work a day in your life."**

Finally - Feel free to connect with me directly on LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/in/burda> by sending an invitation to: burda.mba[at]gmail.com

- Steven Burda, MBA

**PS: - - - - - Books I highly recommend: - - - - -**

- "Blink" • "Never Eat Alone" • "A Friend in Every City" • "The Power of Nice"