

Breaking into tech in the US

Insights for mid-career business professionals from Bangladesh



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

For many onlookers, 'tech' can seem like a single glamorous industry, shaped by popular depictions of Silicon Valley and mainstream media coverage of Big Tech. In reality, it is a broad ecosystem with multiple entry points across product, marketing, strategy, business development and data science. For mid-career professionals from non-STEM backgrounds, breaking into that ecosystem is often less about learning to code and more about understanding how to position existing experience, build the right skills, and navigate a highly competitive hiring market.

SYEDA ADIBA ARIF

To MBA or not to MBA

A sizable Bangladeshi diaspora in the US works in tech. Bangladeshis with Bachelor's, Master's, and PhDs in STEM find it relatively easier to directly break into the industry, versus those who come from a background in business. For the latter, an MBA from a reputable US university can help. An MBA offers on-campus recruiting opportunities and access to the right networks. Lamia Aroni, who studied business in Bangladesh before completing an MBA in the US and building a career in the American tech industry, says that tech is a high-risk, high-reward industry. "Tech recruiting is extremely competitive," she said. "On top of that, there have been a lot of layoffs recently in the industry, which has left many competent and experienced professionals out of work." It is currently an employer's market, with recruiters able to choose from a large pool of experienced, plug-and-play candidates. She added that most US tech companies have limited familiarity with Bangladeshi universities and local employers, and in that context, a globally recognised MBA can help business graduates build credibility and move to business or managerial roles in tech.

For mid-career professionals, an MBA is not just a credential but also a way to make a career pivot more legible to recruiters. Such pivots can be framed around three dimensions: geography, function, and industry. Abreshmee Haque, who followed a similar path from business studies in Bangladesh to an MBA and a career in US tech, advises to keep at least one of those three constants. For Bangladeshis looking to move to the US, that can mean shifting function within the same industry, for example, moving from data science to product management within tech, or moving industry while keeping the same function, such as transitioning from FMCG marketing to a marketing role in tech. Noting that an MBA can signal adaptability, she said, "Recruiters often see MBA graduates as people who can learn quickly and navigate unfamiliar environments in a structured way."

Past experiences that help

For professionals trying to pivot into tech, prior experience can be valuable, but it often needs to be reframed to demonstrate transferability. Unless they are applying for a very similar role in a comparable company, candidates usually

need to show clearly how their earlier work has prepared them for the job they now want. According to Abreshmee and Lamia, many hard and soft skills can transfer well into tech if positioned effectively during the hiring process.

The ability to work cross-functionally is a highly transferable skill needed across roles. Marketing and product management, for instance, are highly people-oriented and require strong stakeholder management, with product roles often demanding experience working closely with engineers. Reflecting on her own background, Lamia said, "In my previous role at a multinational company, I predominantly worked in brands, which gave me ample opportunity to work with people across the value chain, including creative agencies, sales teams, supply chain, etc." Abreshmee highlights another important skill that tech recruiters value: the ability to navigate ambiguity and manage stakeholders. "Working in an MNC creates many opportunities to harness these skills," she said.

New skills to build

For many graduates, strategy or business roles become the entry point into tech, with technical upskilling happening on the job. Candidates coming from all backgrounds need to build familiarity with emerging technologies and develop strong product awareness. When recruiting from MBA programmes, companies are also interested in people who can bring fresh perspectives, strong people skills and strong business judgment.

Abreshmee pointed to data literacy as increasingly important, with some skills such as SQL and Tableau now functioning as 'points-of-parity' qualifications. Building credentials in Scrum, Agile methodology, product management, and cloud fundamentals can further differentiate a candidate's profile. Abreshmee also highlights AI fluency as a trait increasingly valued by employers. "It's not just about core AI work," she said. "Any experience with AI, whether in daily life or as a side hobby, can be useful. Employers want to be sure you're ahead on the adoption curve."

Lamia stressed the importance of understanding B2B tools for business audiences. "One major gap in Bangladesh is that B2B operations are still not very mature, and CRM adoption remains limited. That is a serious blind spot because tech is largely a B2B

game globally."

Inside the hiring process

Many companies recruit directly from university campuses, creating networking opportunities for students. When a target company is not on campus, candidates often need to rely on their networks to get their resumes referred to hiring managers. Lamia said, "When I was recruiting, I made sure to utilise every single network I'm a part of: IBA, MBA, my professional circle, and the broader Bangladeshi-MBA network."

Candidates typically go through several rounds of interviews and assessments. Companies use case-based, behavioural or situational interviews across multiple rounds to get to know the candidates' competencies, experiences, and interests. Cases can range from navigating business downfalls, designing a product or experience, or entering a new market. Abreshmee said, "Interviewers go beyond just tech-related questions. In one of my interviews, for example, we chatted on what might be a good investment in this market." She added that strong interview performance depends heavily on understanding the company in depth, including its culture and leadership. "Most founders have written at least one book. Read at least the summary," she said. "Your research will help you understand the company's culture and where you fit in."

Final advice

Abreshmee's advice to aspiring candidates is to choose a niche and focus deeply on it. "Whether it is payments, retail tech and customer experience, cloud and enterprise, or startup technology, having three or four broad areas of focus helps signal genuine interest to employers," she said.

For those planning to pursue an MBA, Lamia recommends gaining relevant experience before the programme begins. "If you know what your dream role is, do it in Bangladesh before your MBA starts. There are many local startups in edtech, fintech, and healthtech where you can gain relevant experience." Lamia's final advice is to be realistic about the volatility of the industry. "Tech is reactive to economic volatility, shifting trends and changing market demands, resulting in cycles of workforce layoffs," she said. "There is no stigma to getting laid off here. It's part of life. You need to train yourself to be resilient." Given the uncertainty of the system, she strongly recommends having a long-term immigration strategy from the outset. "Don't treat the H-1B as your only path. If you have a STEM degree and are working in tech, use your OPT/STEM OPT window strategically, and speak to a strong immigration lawyer early about whether you may qualify to self-petition through a National Interest Waiver."

A career in tech offers the opportunity to work close to products, trends, and ideas that are making global headlines. In the US, the industry can also offer a level of autonomy and flexibility that adds to its appeal. At the same time, the market today is highly competitive, and the industry remains quite turbulent. For those willing to take that risk and make that investment, the transition can be both possible and highly rewarding.

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Views expressed in this article are of the author's own and may not reflect the editorial stance of The Daily Star.

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"Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect."

VINCE LOMBARDI



Canva acquires two more companies that love to work with AI



IMAGE: SWELLO/UNSPASH

NEXT STEP DESK

Canva has announced the acquisition of two technology companies, Simtheory, an AI collaboration and agent management platform, alongside Orto, a customer data and marketing automation company. The acquisition comes

as the design platform continues to expand its investments in artificial intelligence (AI) and marketing infrastructure. Financial terms of the deals were not disclosed.

Both Simtheory and Orto were founded by Chris and Mike Sharkey, entrepreneurs previously behind Stayz, the

vacation rental platform which was acquired by Fairfax Media. The founders are set to join Canva in leadership roles across its AI and marketing technology divisions. According to Canva, the additions would strengthen its capabilities in areas including agentic AI, data infrastructure, and marketing automation.

Anthropic warns AI will accelerate cyberattacks, recommends precaution

NEXT STEP DESK

AI models will soon discover and exploit software vulnerabilities much faster, according to a new security guide from Anthropic, the maker of Claude. To prepare, the company says organisations should close their patch gap immediately, treating CISA's known exploited vulnerabilities as emergencies and patching internet-facing systems within 24 hours. Security teams should expect a sharp rise in vulnerability reports and automate triage with human oversight.

Companies should also find bugs before shipping code using static analysis and AI-assisted

reviews, prefer memory-safe languages, and scan existing codebases with the same models attackers would use. Zero-trust architecture is essential: tie access to verified hardware, replace long-lived secrets with short-lived tokens, and isolate services by identity.

Incident response times must also shorten. Anthropic suggests putting a model at the front of alert queues and running tabletops for five simultaneous incidents. Small teams should turn on automatic updates, use managed services, enable passkeys, and activate free security tooling on code hosts.

Intel joins Musk-backed semiconductor project

NEXT STEP DESK

Intel is set to join SpaceX, xAI, and Tesla, companies backed by Elon Musk, in an effort to build a new semiconductor manufacturing facility in Texas, marking an expansion of a project aimed at producing advanced chips for artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics.

Known as Terafab, the project was announced in March by Elon Musk as a collaboration



IMAGE: INTEL/X

between his two companies to develop high-performance chips for applications including AI computing, satellite systems

and a proposed space-based data centre, as well as future autonomous vehicles and robotics.

"Our ability to design, fabricate, and package ultra-high-performance chips at scale will help accelerate Terafab's aim to produce 1TW/year of compute to power future advances in AI and robotics," Intel said in a recent post on X. Intel did not provide further details on the scope of its involvement.

OpenAI forces macOS app updates after third-party tool compromise



IMAGE: REUTERS

NEXT STEP DESK

OpenAI is requiring all macOS users to update their desktop applications after a security issue involving a widely used third-party developer library called Axios, the company has announced. The incident was part of a broader software supply chain attack reported on March 31, 2026. A GitHub Actions workflow used in OpenAI's macOS app-signing process downloaded and executed a malicious version of Axios. OpenAI says the workflow had access to certificates used to sign macOS applications, including ChatGPT Desktop, Codex, Codex-cli and Atlas.

OpenAI said its analysis found that the signing certificate was "likely not successfully exfiltrated" by the malicious payload due to timing and other factors. However, the company says it is treating the certificate as compromised and is revoking and rotating it. The company stated that it has found no evidence that user data was accessed, that its systems or intellectual property were compromised, or that its software was altered.