

GALVANIZING THE CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE:

VA CYBER SKILLS ACADEMIES SUCCESS

Overview



VA Cyber Skills Academy

The state of Virginia initiated a grant to help Northern Virginia residents affected by job loss due to COVID-19 and address the demand for cybersecurity professionals. The "VA Cyber Skills Academies" provided full scholarships for cybersecurity training & industry certification. Three organizations, including Katzcy, oversaw the program, with Katzcy specifically highlighted for attracting qualified applicants.

This case study emphasizes Katzcy's successful efforts in attracting qualified applicants to the VA Cyber Skills Academies program.

- **3 organizations**
- **300 registrations in 6 weeks**
- **1400+ initial applications**
- **500 applications completed**

Grant Partners:

- Women's Society of Cyberjutsu
- SANS Institute

The Challenge: *Promote career pathways for displaced workers across a region*

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted Northern Virginia's workforce, leading to significant job losses and economic uncertainty. Many residents found themselves in need of new career paths, particularly in industries that were resilient to such disruptions. Simultaneously, the cybersecurity sector was experiencing rapid growth, with businesses across the state struggling to find qualified cybersecurity professionals.

The challenge for the State of Virginia was twofold:

1. Provide a pathway for displaced workers to gain new, in-demand skills; and
2. Proactively meet the increasing demand for cybersecurity professionals within the business community.

The solution required not just offering training but a targeted outreach strategy to ensure the right individuals were aware of, and engaged with, the opportunity while also satisfying the requirements of businesses searching for skilled talent.

Why Katzcy: *Extensive cybersecurity sector expertise and reach*

Katzcy was chosen for its achievements in branding, digital marketing, and community outreach within the technology and cybersecurity fields. Katzcy was acknowledged for its capacity to promptly and efficiently connect with specific audiences through creative and outcome-oriented campaigns. Their proficiency was deemed crucial for the success of this initiative, which demanded visibility and the capability to inspire and assist potential applicants from initial awareness to program completion.

Driving interest and engagement: *The Katzcy Way*



Outreach and Recruitment: A Strong Brand

Katzcy's approach began with establishing a strong, recognizable brand for the VA Cyber Skills Academies. This involved developing an eye-catching logo, a cohesive color scheme, a clear, motivational messaging strategy, and a user friendly website and collateral.



Virtual Job Fair Promotion: A Targeted Strategy

Katzcy's approach to promoting a virtual job fair involved making it the focal point for prospective applicants. By utilizing targeted social media ads and email marketing, they re-engaged individuals who had previously expressed interest. The job fair, hosted via the Brella platform, provided a polished virtual setting with features such as speakers, program insights, and interactive components like a cybersecurity game inspired by Jeopardy.



Messaging and Promotion: A Compelling Impact

Katzcy crafted all program messaging, ensuring it was clear, concise, and aligned with the program's objectives and distributed via:

- Easy to understand website
- Informative brochures
- Impactful press release
- Compelling imagery and videos for social media

This stronger, integrated marketing campaign helped maintain high levels of engagement and interest and achieved outreach goals.



Automating Applications for a Seamless Experience

Katzcy enhanced the application process by introducing an extensive automation plan through HubSpot. They developed a multi-page website offering in-depth program details and addressing common inquiries. Tailored forms were utilized to gather essential data and files. Additionally, an automated email series was activated according to an applicant's progress, enhancing user satisfaction and notably lessening administrative tasks.

Mission Accomplished: *Exceeding applicant goals*

The virtual career fair, which included keynote speakers, program overviews, and engaging activities such as a Jeopardy-style cyber game, garnered more than 300 registrations in only six weeks. Initially, the program received 1,400 applications, with over 500 applicants successfully completing the initial process. Katzcy's creative incorporation of games and emphasis on upskilling and reskilling proved to be highly effective in recruiting for the program.

Our main goal was to boost recruitment by implementing creative methods, such as incorporating gamification into the job fair process to broaden our reach and influence. Additionally, we enhanced student communication using HubSpot to keep every applicant engaged and well-informed throughout the entire process.

— Jessica Gulick, Katzcy CEO



Interested in boosting your cybersecurity educational or workforce activities? We would love to help, contact us at info@katzcy.com.