

# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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## Write Your Own Book

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By Douglas E. Welch

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As a writer on career issues, I read a lot of books about job searching, management, creativity and other career subjects. As I am sure you have found, these books can range from the good to the bad, right down to the ugly. Yet hundreds of thousands of these books are sold every year. There is a great desire from workers, especially high-tech careerists, to gain an understanding of their careers and their lives. Unfortunately, it is a rare book that provides more than a few good ideas within its covers. In fact, I consider a book a success if I can take away one important concept that can help me in my day-to-day life. While this is an extremely low bar for a book to jump, few do it.

After reading many of these books, I have come to understand that the only book that can truly help you in your career is the one you write yourself. Your book may never make it to the bestseller list (or maybe it will), but the benefits you gain will be immeasurable. Writing down the lessons you learn, from others and from experience, will help you—and might even help those people you mentor in the future. Imagine having a handbook you can pass on to those whom you will be responsible for training.

### The Introduction

The best place to start is always the beginning. Take a few minutes, hours—days, if necessary—and think about where you started. What did you want to be when you grew up? Did you ever think you would be where you are today? Did you even know that your job existed when you were growing up?

Next, take a little time to write down the story of your career. What did you learn from each job? Did you learn it was a bad idea to be around the boss when he smoked pot in the office? Did you find out that some people can get very angry if they think you are working too fast? Did you learn that it is possible to get a 10 percent raise in your first year on the job? Even if you learned by bad example, you still learned a lot with every interview, every job, and every layoff.

### Moving Forward

After you spend some time looking back, take a look around you today. Are you happy where you are? This is not as rare as you might imagine. Everyone has some issues with their jobs, but you might be in the best place for you, right now. Would you like to be somewhere else? This could be a new position in your company, a new company, or even a new career. Sometimes it is just time to find a new way to express yourself. We all change throughout our lives. No one ever said we have to be the same person at 60 that we were at 30. In fact, I think it would be quite a boring world if we were. Life changes us in ways both subtle and obvious. To not acknowledge these changes is a dangerous path.

Now that you have gotten your past down on paper (or at least into your computer), it is time to dream. What type of career would you love to have? Go ahead, think about it and write it down. You may never get to this ideal career, but it can help you to achieve big things if you have an idea where you would like to go. If you never think about the future, you will just be reacting to what is happening around you instead of trying to make things happen.

Unlike a printed book you find at the local bookstore, your book will never be finished. Look back over what you have put down. Were there other lessons you hadn't realized you learned? Are there new dreams you never would have thought of dreaming before? Every day brings another page in your book and your life. Actively thinking about your career, and recording those thoughts, could be the one secret to building your high-tech career . . . or not. Only you know the end of the story. □

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■ **LOOKING FOR DEVELOPEMENT OR TESTING OPPORTUNITY.** I have C/Unix experience as well as training in Java, Oracle, and the Internet. Contact Keith Lee at 858-451-5667.