

# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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## Instead

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*By Douglas E. Welch*

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Many of you have been working in high-tech careers for so long that you might not be able to imagine what other careers you could have pursued. In some cases, perhaps you are wondering how you developed the career you have. We all have interests beyond our careers (or should have). Maybe it is time to find an outlet for the other interests in your life. Reviewing what career you might have chosen can often lead you to new areas of your high-tech career.

### **Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief**

What do you find yourself doing in your off hours? Do you like to putter about the garden, build projects in your workshop, or cycle across the state? All of these activities could be jumping-off points for new aspects of your career. All you have to do is look a little deeper.

When people write me to ask questions about developing a high-tech career, I always ask them what other activities they enjoy. I have found that sometimes the best job you can have is one that combines your high-tech skills with an existing hobby. Perhaps you like cycling. Wouldn't it be great to work for a bicycle manufacturer? Not only would you be able to use your high-tech skills, you would also be working with other cycling fanatics. I am a firm believer that the more you have in common with those around you, the happier you will be.

This is one of the great benefits of a high-tech career. You don't have to work in some large business that holds no interest for you. You can apply your skills at nearly any company. Why not seek out a company that piques your interest? I once worked for a mutual fund company. While the work was OK, I had absolutely no interest in the stock market. In some ways, this affected my work. It was very tiring to work on debugging an enormous spreadsheet for a fund manager when I had no interest in the outcome of the project, much less the company as a whole.

### **Start Looking**

Today, I want you to start looking at your hobbies

and interests to see if there might be a way to better match them with your high-tech career. Do you like boating? Why not find a boat manufacturer that needs a computer support person . . . or a CAD operator . . . or a network technician?

You might find that your search will lead you beyond high-tech and into a totally different career. There is nothing wrong with that. No one said you had to work in high-tech forever. Times have changed. Many of you will find yourself moving through three or four careers in your lifetime. Perhaps combining your high-tech career with your other interests might lead you to entirely different areas.

### **Watch Out**

There are a few caveats when combining a hobby with a career, though. Sometimes, the hobby can turn into drudgery when done on a daily basis. Maybe you like playing baseball, but testing baseball equipment every day can get a little dreary. For some people, though, it might be a dream job. Carefully look at any job you might consider and try to figure out exactly what you would be doing on a daily basis.

The opposite case also applies. You might find that the new job doesn't allow you to use enough of your high-tech skills. I know that I enjoy using these skills, even if I might enjoy other work. I would be unhappy if I wasn't able to use my computer skills. You need to think about your needs and ensure that there is a balance between the high-tech and other aspects of any new job or career.

High-tech positions exist in every company and every industry. Take advantage of this fact by finding a job that combines your interests with your high-tech skills. Jobs of this type will bring you higher levels of satisfaction in your work because they engage not only your high-tech talents, but also other driving interests in your life. This can be one of the best ways to ensure a long and successful high-tech career. □

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