CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

On the Web

By Douglas E. Welch

If you have been reading this column for a while, you may have visited my Web site on occasion. While my site is far from ideal, it does provide me a space to share my past columns, as well as other information about my writing, my work and my life. The Web site certainly is not as busy as most commercial Web sites, but I do receive visitors from all over the world—people who might otherwise have never heard of my writing or me.

This, though, is only one reason why I would recommend that you have your own Web site, no matter how small. You never know who might stumble across your "front door," and what effect they might have on your high-tech career.

An Example

Recently, I gained an ongoing client solely through my Web site. I admit that this doesn't happen every day, but it certainly points up the possibilities. In this case, a man living in Tucson, Arizona, had recently given his old computer to his father, living here in Los Angeles. After returning home, this computer developed a few problems that could not be addressed by phone. The son searched through Google (*www.google.com*) on the phrase "computer coach Los Angeles," and this led him to my Web site and the page containing my rates. A quick phone call later, and I was on my way to assist his father.

While I am no marketing wizard, it seems clear to me that there is a definite advantage to having this simple page available on my site. You can even do it for free. Because I have so much information online, I pay for my own domain (*www.welchwrite.com*) and Web hosting, but you could easily place this page using the free Web space granted by nearly every Internet Service Provider (ISP), like AOL or EarthLink. If you need help, I am sure you have a friend, relative or neighbor who can assist you in getting your "rate card" online.

What to Include

If you haven't yet set up your personal Web page, here are a few items you might want to include.

Your Résumé

Over the years, I have received many calls and e-mails strictly from having my résumé posted on my site. In my case, I simply made an electronic version of my paper résumé, but you could also use this space to show a slide show of your graphic design work, video clips of your editing, or examples of your writing.

If you are worried about your privacy, you can remove information about specific companies, salary histories and such, but still give an overview of your work experience. I believe the goal with any résumé is to interest the reader enough to give you a call. Specifics are helpful, but telling a good story about your work experience is even more important.

Finally, make sure your résumé has an easy way to contact you, whether via phone, e-mail or a Web-based form.

Your Philosophy

If you are an independent consultant, like myself, it can be helpful to have a short paragraph or two stating your philosophy toward your work. This can help a potential client to understand you a bit better and, hopefully, interest them enough to contact you. It can also act as a bit of a "gatekeeper," turning away those clients whose own ideas of computer coaching might not match yours.

Your Rates

It is disappointing to a client when they take the time to call or e-mail, only to find out that your services are beyond their budget. Clearly state your rates up front to prevent any misunderstandings. This also helps you to stand firm on your rates when someone asks you to lower them.

Your Writing, Newsletters, Tips or Hints

If you regularly send out tips to your clients, you may want to include this same information on your Web site. The more content you include, the more likely you are to have your Web site listed in various Internet search engines. This makes it easier for people to "stumble across" you and your services.

While I doubt that my Web site is the number-one search result for any general category, hundreds of people arrive at my site via Google, Yahoo! and other search engines. If you have content that might interest others, it makes great business sense to include that information on your Web site so it can continue assisting people—and marketing your services—far into the future.

If you want to expand your high-tech career, it makes sense to use the high-tech tools of the Internet to assist you. Whether you are posting a simple résumé, rate card or brochure, or presenting a full-blown Web site, you may

find that people will come looking for you. While you shouldn't expect a dramatic increase in clients, you may find that having a Web site out there selling for you 24/7 can introduce you to people who might otherwise not have found you. The minimal amount of work required is easily balanced by finding even one or two new clients or recruiter phone calls. Your high-tech career deserves to be promoted, even in this small way. ❏

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