

Jobs of the Future

Can you compete with technology?

By Tammie Chestnut

Let's face it. Not everyone wants to grow up to be a fireman anymore. Nowadays, kids want to invent a high tech chemical treatment that will enable construction workers to create and build totally fireproof buildings.

So the Baby boomers are lost, while the Generation Xer's steal their jobs. So back to school you go. No more screaming, you want me to do what?! Fix a computer, get your network operating again? Sorry, I am not equipped, furthermore I have no idea what you're talking about. In walks the new breed of employees, computer literate and technology-ready college grads.

Greetings, Webmaster. Information Techie... Computer Guru. And hello, ATM repairman --- goodbye bank tellers. Hello, on-line trading, goodbye stock brokers. Even full service gas stations are a thing of the past. No longer does a loyal gas station attendant offer to pump your gas, this person does not exist. Instead, we live in a world of convenient self-serve for the computer literate only. In fact, I recently visited a gas station with no attendants, everything was totally automated. I could use cash, credit or debit to pay for my gas purchase. No friendly smiles, no one wiped my windshields or checked under my hood. I had to do it all myself. And when its all done, the machine even gave me a receipt.

And, who would have thought, even a few years ago, that the term "Webmaster" would enter the mainstream? In the early 90's, the World Wide Web was only a concept- now the Web is a force with great ramifications. Millions of web sites exist and are competing for recognition on a daily basis.

New job descriptions and projects are spreading like wildfire. A quick look at the Web reveals interesting and rewarding jobs have been created due to the popularity and convenience of the World Wide Web. Last year, as many as 100,000 new internet jobs were created, more than 2,500 of them in the executive and management ranks, according to a study by Christian and Timbers Inc., an executive-search firm based in Cleveland. That's up from 1995 when 36,000 positions were created in specialties such as

facilitating Internet access and communication, developing Internet software, maintaining the necessary hardware and gathering on-line information. That year, more than 1,800 jobs opened up at internet-related companies.

But it's here, and it's just the vanguard of new job titles spinning through the workplace. They reflect changes in technology resulting in new ways firms treat and keep employees. There's still plenty of room for traditional job definitions - we'll always need accountants and sales reps - but the marketplace demands something new. Regional managers may become the global manager, and most large companies will likely have a chief knowledge officer and a director of business ethics. Other jobs, you've probably never heard of. Neither had we until I got my hands on some very unusual business cards. What's your job of the future?

The fast pace of technology changes get most of the credit for reshaping the world of work: computers, voice mail, e-mail, the Internet, and now the Intranet (a company's internal Web system).

These advances have put such positions as network administrator, network architect, and e-mail processor on virtually every payroll. But even more new jobs have taken shape on the horizon. Among them: director of security, encryption expert, Intranet manager, and Internet sales manager.

Another increasingly popular job title - information navigator, someone who manages the massive data companies store on computers, making sure it's available to people who need it.

And what about all that untapped knowledge? Increasingly, businesses recognize that they must harness the knowledge of their workers to remain competitive. And they need to have people who know how to tap into it. What does the accountant, for example, know about the Internet that may benefit the marketing department?

As job hopping becomes mainstream, companies want to capture employee knowledge before it heads out the door. Downsizing and outsourcing, consultants say, will continue into the next century. And

while a "director of downsizing" seems unlikely a chief of cost cutting, outsourcing, or people purchasing isn't. And with job hopping now a fixture of the workplace, many companies will hire a director of career development. Their job to help workers advance within a company and also help those who want to land positions elsewhere. Changing commutes will also roll out new positions, many of them already in the workplace. How about director of mobile officing or virtual officing? Or telecommuting evangelist? In a workplace prone to litigation, expect to see managers of business ethics and dispute mediation.

Companies will also increase their emphasis on employees' emotional well being. The most progressive companies will be building employees spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Companies might have a minister of moral propaganda to keep the spirits high and productivity growing.

Other futurists envision stress busters and managers of productivity and health. Some companies already have a director of employee recognition. And with employees increasingly isolated from each other, thanks to computers and work-at-home plans, companies may tap directors of team building and socialization. It's important for companies to create a culture and a spirit within the organization that is whole and not fragmented.'

It seems as the workplace becomes more paperless, although jobs will be lost, many more are created. We are seeing the advent of true global corporations and that will create a series of jobs that require people to manage, 24 hours a day, workers all over the world. No doubt, we will soon witness the emergence of the true global manager. At the same time, globalization will demand that corporations integrate cultures and create unity among diversity.

Where will you fit in?

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