



THREE WAYS TO JUMPSTART YOUR IT CAREER

We all get stuck in ruts from time to time, and that happens on the job as well. You've thought about doing something different with your information technology career, but just haven't quite gotten around to it yet. Sound familiar?

You can make 2006 the best year yet for your IT career. There are several simple steps you can take to accelerate your career - but you have to take the step, not just think about it!

Learn something new. One of the biggest reasons you get tired of a job is that you're doing the same thing every day. If you happen to love what you do, that's great, but if not it's time to break out of the box. Besides, learning a new skill adds value to your career. If you've been doing server work for a long time, take the time to learn some Cisco skills. If you're an Exchange specialist, learn some Linux skills.

Get certified. Not very many of us get to work for the same company for the rest of our IT careers. The only job security is the security you give yourself, and one of the ways to get that security is to add professional certifications to your resume. Certifications such as the MCSE and CCNA get you noticed and help you stand out from the crowd. Ask yourself what your resume would look like if you were laid off today, and then take steps to improve yourself and your professional standing.

Be prepared to take one step backwards in order to take multiple steps forward. You may be in a situation I was in a while back when my employer saw me as strictly a server guy. I wanted to get on the Cisco side of things, but there was this perception that I was "only a LAN guy". I had to leave that company to get my shot. There was some short-term financial pain, but in the long run it was the best career move I've ever made.

People get typecast in every field. In his book "Often Wrong, Never In Doubt", Donny Deutsch writes about a job candidate who wanted to become a junior ad executive, but couldn't break in with his current employer - which was an ad agency! He was typecast in a support role, so he applied to other ad firms and was quickly hired.

Sometimes you have to look outside your current situation in order to create a new situation for yourself. Don't be afraid to take a step backwards in order to open up new possibilities for yourself. There's an amazing career out there, waiting for you - if you have the courage to make it and take it.

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