How not to get "offshored"

By Robert L. Mitchell

Mar 31 2006 - 12:12pm

Here's my three-step weekend reading program for IT folks who are concerned about offshoring and IT careers.

FIRST STOP: THE ACM REPORT

IT professionals interested in keeping ahead of the offshoring wave will want to read through the recently released Globalization and Offshoring of Software, written by the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Job Migration Task Force. The executive summary is a must read for employers and IT professionals alike.

In addition to giving advice, the report, a collaborative effort by a global team of industry professionals and academics, includes some sobering statistics. But it interprets those critically rather than taking them at face value. For example:

"Some reports suggest that 12 to 14 million jobs are vulnerable to offshoring over the next 15 years. This number is, at best, an upper limit on the number of jobs at risk. To date, the annual job loss attributable to offshoring is approximately 2 to 3 percent of the IT workforce. But this number is small compared with the much higher level of job loss and creation that occurs every year in the United States."

Another point states that "Thirty percent of the world's largest 1,000 firms are offshoring work" rather than taking them at face value. For example,

"A [job] candidate's degree and technical skills might land him the interview. But his entrepreneurial skills and business savvy set him apart from the pack and bode best for his career, according to a new report released this week by the Society for Information Management (SIM). "You can download the executive summary for "The Information Technology Workforce: Trends and Implications 2005-2008" here and members have access to the full study. Perhaps it's time to join if you're not already a member."

SECOND STOP: THE SIM STUDY

Read Eric La's Computerworld story, You can lower the odds of being outsourced. Bottom line: "A [job] candidate's degree and technical skills might land him the interview. But his entrepreneurial skills and business savvy set him apart from the pack and bode best for his career, according to a new report released this week by the Society for Information Management (SIM). "You can download the executive summary for "The Information Technology Workforce: Trends and Implications 2005-2008" here and members have access to the full study. Perhaps it's time to join if you're not already a member."

THIRD STOP: THE AFCOM PRESENTATION

As I mentioned earlier in the week, AFCOM's Data Center Institute also released its own study, which was presented in a keynote speech at Data Center World the week of March 19th. View the full presentation in PDF format here. I mentioned this study and a Computerworld story about it, in my recent blog, The IT employment paradox. The last three items are what most people need to focus on. But the real trick is the last item: figuring out what industries and job occupations are "safe" isn't always obvious.

The keys to survival include:

- Obtaining a strong foundational education
- Learning the technologies used in the global software industry
- Keeping skills up to date throughout your career
- Developing good teamwork and communication skills
- Becoming familiar with other cultures
- Managing careers so as to choose work in industries and job occupations less likely to be automated or sent to a low-wage country.

The sophistication of today's software industry.

About Robert L. Mitchell

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Group and was AFCOM's member survey. This subject will be part of an upcoming feature I am working on. That story - a follow up to the feature Morphing the Mainframe - will appear in the April 24th issue of Computerworld.

If you do your reading this weekend I won’t guarantee that you’ll have all of the answers, but you’ll certainly have a good grip on the issues and trends that could affect your career going forward.

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April 1 foolishness (and fact hunt)
from Computerworld Blogs on Mon, 04/03/2006 - 11:01am
If it's Monday, it must be IT Blogwatch, in which we miss April Fools day ... or did we? Not to mention some uncommon facts (many of which are, surprisingly, true) ...

New jobs to get ready for
from Offshore, Onshore: The Fuss about Outsourcing on Fri, 03/31/2006 - 4:08pm
Time for some predictions... The Association for Computing Machinery says that some of the ways to decrease your chances of getting "offshored" are "obtaining a strong foundational education, learning the technologies used in the global software industry

Technology and business makes a balanced match
from Computerworld Blogs on Fri, 03/31/2006 - 1:31pm
Finally there's agreement that successful technology management requires more than just technology skills.
This article at Computerworld details a report released by the Society for Information Management that shows organizations are desperate for IT peo

The IT employment paradox
from Computerworld Blogs on Fri, 03/31/2006 - 1:14pm
In Aging Workers, Automation Portend IT Hiring Problems, Pat Thibodeau points out a paradox in the IT hiring space. An AFCOM study of 179 IT managers revealed that:

Nearly half said it takes them a minimum of three months to fill senior-level tec

Offshoring or Oustourcing
Offshoring or Oustourcing for that matter is not something that is going away in the years to come. Though that is the case, practicing these methods that you mentioned could be a great help in order for a person not to lose a job because of such business trend.

By elaine (not verified) at Mon, 04/03/2006 - 9:17am | reply
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