

How to Get into IT without Experience or Qualifications.

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**How to Get into IT without Experience or Qualifications.**

**By Jon Lawrance**

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If there was ever an industry to get into, Information Technology must be it. The opportunities abound for earning a lucrative living and now is the time to get on board.

But how? If you have computer skill but no experience (or qualifications), the employment agencies will tell you the same old line, "You need experience before anyone will look at you."

It's just plain old Catch-22. You need the work to get the experience but you can't get that first job to give you a track record and therefore verifiable experience. With this logic, it amazes me that anyone actually gets into IT!

Qualifications help but even that is no guarantee nowadays of getting an IT job. And what do you do when you don't have qualifications but you want to start now? I mean right now, not 3 months later after you've paid a fortune for certification and given up your job to have enough study time.

All is not lost. You have two alternatives.

#1. Offer your services free of charge

For a company to take on – as an employee – someone with no experience is a risky proposition. But all companies need IT help. Therefore, do the following:

a) Make a list of 10 local small businesses with approximately 5 to 10 employees. This size of business is too small to have a permanent in-house IT manager yet big enough to have need for IT support.

b) Call each with the following script:

"I'm calling about the possibility of working for your company free of charge in exchange for work experience. So, I'd like to speak to the owner about this please. Could you see if they are available?"

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This will get the attention of whoever answers the phone as they'll realise it's not just another sales call. You'll have a high chance of getting through to the boss.

c) If you get through to the boss, say...

"I'm approaching you because I want to work for your company free of charge in exchange for work experience and a good reference. My area of expertise is in IT. I'm an expert on computer systems and feel sure I can provide some valuable input to your company. And it won't cost you anything. Can we set up a meeting to explore this possibility?"

Get straight to the point as business owners are very busy creatures indeed. Go for a meeting where you have the opportunity to explain in detail how you can help them out. When you explain over the

phone, it is much easier for them to terminate the call without hearing your full story.

d) If you fail to get through to the boss, say...

"Can I leave my number so he can call me if interested? The number is 123 456-7899. I am contacting a number of other companies today so the earlier he can contact me the better. Thanks."

Put the pressure on them to respond quickly or forever lose the chance of using you free of charge.

e) When you arrive for your interview, you would have already prepared your resume so the boss can see at a glance what your background is. In addition to that, outline your IT skills and where you think these skills would benefit a company. For example, if you were good at website design and promotion, say...

"I could improve the number of visitors to your website and get them to leave their email for you."

This may then lead into specifics on how you can help that company.

f) If you end up doing some work for that company, keep it to 2 to 4 weeks. You don't want a zero wage forever! After your no-charge stint, offer to provide future support at a reasonably competitive rate. They may be very pleased with what you did for them and there would be good will established because you did it all for free. When they need future IT support the chances of them choosing you are very high indeed. There you go, your first fee paying customer.

#2: Start up on your own

Yes, you heard me. Start your own computer consultancy – it's not as difficult as you might suspect. All you need is to know more than 90% of the population, which is quite easy when most have poor to mediocre computer literacy. In addition, if you have good skills in a specialist area, you are likely to know more than 99% of the population.

There is one factor working in your favour here: fear of computers. This illogical phobia will open doors

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for you because what is perceived to be extremely complicated may be a walk in the park for you.

While I'm talking about starting up on your own, this need not mean you will always work for yourself. You can do, but you don't have to. The primary aim here is to get a track record, first and foremost. Then you can decide what to do.

Starting up as an IT consultant is a sizeable topic in itself, but that doesn't mean to say it is not easy. You just need the right information.

The important thing to remember is this: don't listen to anyone (and I mean anyone) who says: you need qualifications; experience; capital; contacts or any of that rubbish. It's simply not true. Sure, all these things help but they are not pre-requisites for you to make a blazing success starting on your own. I started my own consultancy from scratch and I had no money, no contacts, no computer consultancy experience, and worse of all, I was heavily in debt.

Nowadays – after 5 years experience – I have contracts that pay me over \$200 per hour. This is a far cry from the pitiful wage I used to earn before I got into IT.

What does it take to get into IT by starting up on your own?

Two things: Knowledge and Action.

### Action

Action is the easy part. You just do it! Of course, you need the motivation to get going, to overcome your inertia. But once you start seeing the results, you get pulled along by it all. Your results give you the motivation to take action and the action brings more results. You get caught in an upward spiral.

### Knowledge

Knowledge is more difficult. The reason is simple: everyone is full of good sounding advice and it's difficult to know who to listen to. After all, if you listened to most people they would put you off starting in the first place. That is self-defeating.

My recommendation is to only listen to those who have been where you want to go. Talking with someone who runs their own business will give you great insight into what it is really like. Talking with someone who has never run their own business will teach you nothing.

Best of all, speak to someone who is in the industry you want to get into. The information will be 100% relevant and therefore quite likely to be effective. Don't take everything they say as the gospel truth. They may want to help you out but will not divulge their closest kept competitive secrets for fear of losing business to you. This particularly applies if you are local to each other and may therefore cannibalise each others area.

How do you get this information? Again, there are many methods, some easier than others. You could phone up a small business (1 to 5 employees) outside of your locality and ask if you can take the boss out for lunch. Be up front that you want to get into the same industry and would like some advice. I had

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one guy ask if I would help him a few years back. I was happy to and took great pleasure in it. Now, he is earning a very healthy living doing what he enjoys.

The alternative is to buy related books and materials where you can get in–depth information "How to do it" style.

### Conclusion

It does not matter whether you have experience or not. If you have some reasonable computer skills and you want to get into IT, you just have to decide to do it. There is so much opportunity in this rapidly changing industry that your chances of success are very high indeed.

Take those vital first steps now!

Jon Lawrance

Jon Lawrance has developed The Instant Computer Consultant Toolkit to help others start their own computer consultancy. He has distilled his years of wisdom into a how–to manual packed to the brim with trade secrets, inside information and know–how. So listen to what he has to say as he knows what he is talking about. Visit <http://www.sfi.bz/itjobs.html> where you can learn more about how to start your own successful computer consultancy.

## **Interview Preparation Made Easy: Create An Interview Preparation List**

**By Donna Monday**

Here's a quick way to compare your own job experience and qualifications with those that your prospective employer is looking for in a specific job position. Make an "Interview Preparation List". When you prepare for a job interview, it's good to have a quick reference of your past work experience that you can study ahead of time to help prepare you for the specific job you're interviewing for.

Grab a sheet of paper and make three columns.

Column A will be "Position Requirements"; Column B will be "Your Qualifications and Experience"; and

Column C will list "Your Stories". For this exercise, you'll be using the actual job description from the employer.

So, in Column A (Position Requirements) you'll take one piece of the job description and write for example: "Ability to work well with others." Ok. Now you'll have to think about your own experiences while working well with others. What specific examples do you have that demonstrates this ability?

Great. You've thought of something. In this example, we'll write under Column B (Your Qualifications and Experience) "Worked on the XYZ project team."

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Now you need to break it down even further and list a specific action-oriented example of "working well with others" on the XYZ project team.

In Column C (Your Stories) you write something like this: "Coordinated winning marketing campaign which resulted in a successful launch of new product." Wow. See how successful that makes you look?

Keep going until you've listed something for every part of the job description. Use your list when preparing for a job interview or even to prepare your resume.

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Donna Monday

Get Hired Now! Use These Online Interview Tips

Interview Preparation Made Easy: Create An Interview Preparation List

What You Should Know About How to Write that Cover Letter. Improve Your Chances of Getting the Interview

The Resume: What It Is And How To Use It

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