

Locating a Telecommuting Opportunity... As easy as shooting a watermelon out your nose!

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**By Edward B. Toupin**

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I can say that getting a solid telecommuting opportunity is not an easy task. They're out there, but locating them can be extremely difficult and time-consuming. Even with all the e-books, reports, and telecommuting packages you've probably purchased, it just doesn't happen overnight.

--- What can I do? ---

The best way to break into a telecommuting situation is to locate an office job that can be performed anywhere. This will help you develop a reputation as a self-motivated, reliable, professional worker. Information-based jobs with a minimum amount of required face-time are good prospects. Also, look for jobs that are physically portable---that is, whatever the telecommuter needs to do the job can be accessed over a phone line.

A few of the job categories best suited for telecommuting include: Advertising & Marketing, Architectural and Computer Aided Design, Artists and Writers, Billing and Collections, Credit and Collections, Customer Service, Clerical and Secretarial, Data Entry and Transcription, Engineering, Photography, Programmers and Database Administrators, Sales, Telemarketers, Translators, and Web Designers and Developers.

--- How do I smell? ---

Whether you're face-to-face or over the Internet, your cover letter and resume are essential. In fact, they're your only tools when locating and applying for jobs on the Internet!

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The cover letter can make or break the possibility of getting a job. It gives the employer an idea of what you can do for them and what you're looking for in an opportunity. Remember, what you want and what they offer have to match or you're out. Your objective is to find a job you want to do, not something you feel that you have to do.

Once they get past the cover letter, they will usually read the resume. Employers want to hire people who can do the job. Make sure that your resume is complete and reflects your abilities to handle the position. To enhance the presentation, tailor the resume to the opportunity to show an employer what you know and what you can do. After all, you're going to get a job—it's just a question of which one.

### ---- Locating Opportunities ----

Locating a job is easy. Just go to one of the thousands of sites that are out on the Web and start looking. It should only take you about three or four years to search them all. I'm sure you have that much time!

The best way I've found to search for a job is to follow these steps:

- Make a task list that outlines your daily job–search activities.
- Find several well–known job sites and post your resume. Search the lists of jobs and prepare the site's job agents to help you locate various jobs.
- Keep track of all employers you contact, the date of your contacts, people you talk/e–mail with, and special notes about the contacts.
- Apply to multiple companies on a given job site to save time.
- Always have a resume and cover letter ready to upload whenever a lead comes your way.
- Follow–up leads immediately. If you find out about a job late in the day, contact them right away.
- Tell everyone you know that you are looking for job. Stay in touch with friends and contacts. Follow–up new leads immediately.

### \* Search Sites

Keep in mind that many job sites replicate data from other sites. Some sites even post the contents of the USENET job groups on their sites as potential job opportunities. This leads to the point that out of 1,000 jobs that you

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search on the Web, more than half are duplicates copied from one or more other sites. The easiest way to search for a telecommuting opportunity is to stick to a few of the primary search resources. The primary sites that I've found beneficial are shown in the following list:

- work ---- <http://www.ework.com/>
- eLance ---- <http://www.elance.com/>
- FreetimeJobs ---- <http://www.freetimejobs.com>
- Workaholics4Hire ---- <http://www.workaholics4hire.com>
- Guru.com ---- <http://www.guru.com>
- IC Planet ---- <http://www.icplanet.com>
- Jobvertise ---- <http://www.jobvertise.com>
- Headhunter ---- <http://www.headhunter.net>
- Monster ---- <http://www.monster.com>
- Net-Temps ---- <http://www.net-temps.com>
- Brassring ---- <http://www.brassring.com>
- JobOptions ---- <http://www.joboptions.com>

Some of the more relevant keywords I've successfully used in my searches include: freelance, telecommute, telecommuting, telecommuter, , work at home, work from home, telework, off-site, offsite. The keyword includes any keyword that would apply to your field or any field of your choice.

### \* Other Resources

An additional resource is the USENET newsgroups. USENET provides 60,000 or more newsgroups that contain thousands of postings. Several groups contain important job postings that can potentially lead to a telecommuting contract opportunity. One of the primary sites that provides a searchable front-end to USENET is Google (<http://www.google.com>).

Other useful tools for Web and newsgroup searches are the WebFerret and NewsFerret by FerretSoft (<http://www.ferretsoft.com>). Another great tool is Copernic by Copernic Technologies (<http://www.copernic.com/>). These applications provide user-friendly front-ends and search several servers simultaneously from your local machine. I use these tools all the time for job searches as well as research for my writing.

### ---- Make Yourself Known ----

Many employers search for potential employees on the various job boards around the Web. It's essential that you have an up-to-date resume posted at these sites so you can be found. Some of the sites for successfully acquiring jobs through resume postings include:

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- eWork ---- <http://www.ework.com>
- Dice ---- <http://www.dice.com>
- Guru.com ---- <http://www.guru.com>
- Headhunter.net ---- <http://www.headhunter.net>
- Net-Temps ---- <http://www.net-temps.com>
- Monster.com ---- <http://www.monster.com>

It's also a good idea to create a Web site that shows your portfolio of work. Provide a couple of resumes targeting your desired jobs, a few samples of your work, and an explanation of the type of job that interests you. Promote the site and place the URL in your e-mail signature so that prospective employers can locate the site and get a glimpse of your abilities.

### ---- The Interview ----

One thing I always do before an interview is to learn as much as possible about the company from their Web site. I learn about what they do and find out about their key players. If the company doesn't have a Web site, they're probably not going to support telecommuting.

Another way to find out information is to do a Web search on various keywords associated with the company. For instance, searching for their name, their product, or their industry topics will usually provide quite a bit of background.

Once you learn about them, prepare a small statement that summarizes the company. Also, prepare some questions related to your target job. When you're asked if you have questions, state your summary to the interviewer and flow into your first question. This let the interviewer know that you took the time to do research. Make sure that you ask for examples of what you'll be doing as well as information on benefits for telecommuters.

### ---- Landing a Job ----

Many potential employers will tell you that you'll have to spend time in their office. For the most part, that's not entirely the case. Realize that many companies are still in the mode of having people in-house.

You don't have to accept every job that comes your way. For one, if you take on too many things, you'll never be able to finish anything to the proper level of care required. Keep moving forward in your direction and your search. Just remember, you're looking for a telecommuting opportunity!

Edward B. Toupin is a freelance consultant, writer, and published author living in Las Vegas with his

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singer/actress wife. He currently handle technical writing tasks for various companies in New York, Chicago, and Denver as well as imagineers and markets feature-length screenpl

## **THE WATERMELON SEED**

**By Irvin L. Rozier**

### **THE WATERMELON SEED by Irvin L. Rozier**

Today I planted a watermelon seed  
Planted it in hope that it would feed  
Three or four little children dear to me  
The ground was prepared by the apple tree  
Of grass and weeds the soil was bare  
The tiny seed was planted with care  
With a prayer to the LORD up on high  
That He would cause the seed to grow, by and by  
Next to the watermelon, I planted some sunflowers  
Then I waited on the LORD to send some showers  
I watched the seeds spring forth and grow  
One day after the rain, I spied a rainbow  
It spread so mightily across the sky  
This beauty was from God who reigns on high  
After many days the watermelon grew with might  
The sunflowers bursted with colors, O what a sight  
Finally the day came when I picked the melon  
This juicy fruit I would not be selling  
I called my grandsons, my great nephews and nieces  
Cut up the watermelon and gave them the pieces  
My heart rejoiced to see the juice run down their faces  
With a President or King I wouldn't trade places  
To see this gift from our loving God  
A juicy treat sprung forth from the sod.

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author, preacher, retired military

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