



# CAREER COACH

BY LORNA GAREY

**DEAR CAREER COACH:** I've been in IT 30 years, working up the ranks from operations to programming to systems support. I've been with the same company 14 years, and a layoff is imminent. I'm ready for a change. What are the hot career paths?

**METAMORPHOSIS MAN**

**DEAR METAMAN:**

Darwin said, "It's not the strongest of the species that survives nor the most intelligent, but the one that is most responsive to change." In the current economic climate, those are words to live by.

Fortunately, your experience puts you in the right place at the right time. IT jobs hold the top seven spots on the U.S. Department of Labor's list of the 25 fastest growing occupations through 2010:

1. Computer software engineer (applications): 100 percent growth, from 380,000 jobs in 2000 to 760,100 in 2010.
2. Computer support specialist: 97 percent growth.
3. Computer software engineer (systems software): 90 percent growth.
4. Network administrator: 82 percent growth.
5. Network systems and data-communications analyst: 77 percent growth.
6. Desktop publisher: 67 percent growth.
7. Database administrator: 66 percent growth.

You can get information on

experience and education required, as well as average wages nationwide, at America's Career InfoNet, [www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp](http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp).

**I'm a senior LAN administrator, and I want to assume a management role. But it seems that IT management is dominated by young guys with master's degrees who never worked a day in the field. I'm in my early 30s, with a B.S. and multiple certifications. Would a master's degree help me reach my goal?**

**ALWAYS LOOKING AHEAD**

**DEAR LOOKING:**

Don MacVittie, an IT project manager for a major Midwest utility and a NETWORK COMPUTING contributing editor, says that an MBA is the accepted course into management and signals your

interest in climbing the ladder. Recently he narrowed the field of 300 applicants for an open IT position at his company by first eliminating those without master's degrees.

For the type of management you hope to do, a master's in organizational theory, operations or computer science would increase your appeal. If you can earn your degree while keeping up your technical chops, you should be considered a valuable asset to almost any organization.

For more on the business side of IT, see NETWORK COMPUTING's recent coverage at [www.nwc.com/core/core9.html](http://www.nwc.com/core/core9.html). A list of master's programs is available online at [www.masters-degree-online.net](http://www.masters-degree-online.net). **NWC**

Send your questions to [careercoach@nwc.com](mailto:careercoach@nwc.com)



ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL GUIDERA

## GAME PLAN

Remember that lunch or dinner meetings with clients, prospective employers or superiors are professional, not social, occasions, so be on your best behavior. A recent study by The Creative Group, a division of staffing company Robert Half International, lists being late and being rude to the wait staff as the top behavioral blunders. Some tips: Dress appropriately; if given the option, choose a quiet restaurant that you know has good service and a diverse menu; avoid messy foods like ribs; and, it should go without saying, turn off your cell phone.