



SURFING THE CAREER WAVE IN THE NEW ERA

By Kimo Look

As you surf the Internet in this Information Age, I ask you, “How are you managing your career?” Many of the assumptions and values around your career that made perfect sense 20 years ago are gone today and new changes are guaranteed to come hard and fast.

Your career success depends on whether you surf the waves of change, or just stand on the beach while they crash down on you. Your career is your future, care for it carefully.

As my previous articles have indicated, we are in the early years of a new era, the Information Age. The start of anything big and new is invariably dicey. The rules change quickly as we all struggle to get on the same page. We are leaving behind the old millenium and its paradigms surrounding careers. The American Dream is no longer attained by the old formula (four-year degree + “good company” = career progression).

What to do? In a changing environment, like that of the ocean, do what good surfers do - continually watch your environment. Understanding the changes to our economy and the impacts of the newly emerging technologies helps you accept and anticipate the changes that directly affect you. Professional societies are excellent for this. Attend and be active. In the Information Age, it is deadly to not understand the big picture and where you fit in. The good news is that, in this era, it’s easy to find the resources you need to stay one step ahead.

Also, plan for the big spills and the changing tides that may leave you temporarily unemployed. This means having a solid financial plan rather than living two paychecks away from insolvency, as most Americans are rumored to. Keep your attitude young and your eyes open. View your time with each employer as a surfer regards a particular wave. Make the most of it, ride it as long as you can, and have fun. But if you want to keep going, be looking for the next wave to ride after the one you’re on subsides.