**Choosing an IT Career Path**

Most people on English4IT.com are either studying for their first job in IT, or else trying to improve their current IT career. If this is the case with you, well then this unit should really help. Sometimes the hardest part of meeting a goal is to properly define what you are trying to accomplish in the first place. In this article we we will discuss the top IT job positions available around the world right now. So read the rest of the article, reflect on which career most suits your personality... and then go for it!

There are several things to keep in mind when determining what field of IT to go into. Keep an eye on job web sites such as DICE.com or Monster.com to see which jobs are most in-demand. Keep in mind that for many jobs described below, there are several levels of positions available. For instance there are "junior", "senior", and "lead" software developer positions available. You probably can't start out you career as a lead developer. You have to know your own limits.

Be honest with yourself. If you don't have previous experience, good contacts, or a good degree from a well-known university, you will be more successful in getting a lower-level job. Also, find out what the job you are applying for typically pays in your area. If you are young, living in a financially depressed area, or really need a job, keep your salary expectations a bit lower than the average. This will make your chances much higher than normal to get hired. Once you have "job experience" then you will be in a good position to ask for more money. Sometimes the best way to get more money is to quit your job and work for another similar company. This may sound cruel or thankless, but that is how business works in the real world.

Everyone who works hard deserves a raise every year. How do you show your IT manager that you are a good performer? Easy. Show up on time, be dependable, be active in the meetings, and always do a little bit more than is asked of you. Also equally important is to be well-liked by members of your team. Read on for more details...

**Learn something new every day**

IT is an area where people are judged largely by how much they know. If money and a high job position are important to you, you can quickly raise your level by telling your manager that you want harder tasks and more responsibility. IT Managers normally love it when employees ask for more responsibility. When you meet with your manager, set goals for yourself and meet or exceed those goals. Here are some things you can do to increase your worth to your company:

1. learn a new programming language
2. take a certification such a Microsoft, Linux Professional Institute, or Cisco
3. study to be a ScrumMaster or another type of project manager.

Meeting set goals can have beneficial results when it's time to renegotiate salaries, survive a round of layoffs, or get a promotion.

**Appearance and attitude is very important!**

Take an active interest in things outside IT: such as sports, politics, music, and film. This will make socializing at company events easier for you. If you are disliked in the company then you will not get promotions or important projects.

**Be courteous, helpful, and respectful to others**

In my own career, I have been in some good IT departments and some bad ones. In a good IT department, the engineers are known for sharing knowledge and helping each other. In bad IT departments, the engineers are secretive and hide knowledge. How can everyone get better if some people are selfish with what they know? Information wants to be free. You must set it free. Despite the fact that I have been to several universities, graduate school, and have collected many IT certifications, I have still learned much more about IT from my fellow engineers than from all my higher education combined. So my advice is to be kind and respect your fellow IT staff. They are your family for eight hours every day, forty hours every week!

When you start a new job, realize how some people are nice to you and some people ignore you. Which kind of person do you want to be? When you get a new junior team member, try to help them and include them in decisions. Make sure they have someone to eat lunch with. If you party after work with your co-workers, invite new employees with you. Being nice to new people can have many rewards, both emotionally and financially.

Back in the 90's we used to have a saying, "Think globally, act locally." What this means is that just by being nice and pleasant yourself, you can make the whole world a more nice and pleasant place as well.

**Have your own mind and your own opinions**

State your opinions in meetings and give good reasons and facts to back up your opinions. But don't be stubborn or insistent if things don't go your way. And whatever you do, please don't be passive-aggressive! Passive-aggressive behavior is when you think something bad about a person or an idea, and then you talk badly behind someone's back (when that person is not around). This is very destructive behavior to both yourself and your IT department.

Okay, now we are ready now to investigate some popular IT job positions. I will rate the following jobs based on the following criteria: respect, qualities, salary, dress, and fun factor. I will also include some notes. These are subjective opinions. Some are even intentionally funny. If you disagree with me, please feel free to flame me.

[**CTO**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/587)**(Chief Technical Officer),**[**CIO**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/595)**(Chief Information Officer)**
Respect: Very High
Qualities: Business savvy, technical mindset, good people skills
Average Salary: $150,000
Dress: Business suit and very clean
Fun Factor: Only fun if you are a workaholic or on a power trip.
Notes: These jobs are highly competitive and usually political, so your chances are low. Sorry.

[**Enterprise Architect**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/596)
Respect: High
Qualities: Good technical, business, and design skills
Salary: $100,000
Dress: Clean and presentable with collared shirt and pants
Fun Factor: Fun job because you get to talk to all other departments
Notes: Responsible for all solutions that work; not responsible for ones that don't work

[**IT Manager**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/612)
Respect: Medium-High
Qualities: Detail oriented, punctual, critical, supportive
Salary: $70,000
Dress: Business Casual
Fun Factor: Can be fun but often very stressed
Notes: They always seem to be working

[**Technical Writer**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/601)
Respect: Medium
Qualities: Excellent writing skills, good technical mind
Salary: $50,000
Dress: Business Casual
Fun Factor: Writers are often good at telling stories

[**Graphic Designer**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/590)
Respect: Low-Medium
Qualities: Excellent drawing and illustration skills, good color matching and artistic qualities
Salary: $50,000
Dress: Casual
Fun Factor: Generally fun people and sometimes a bit moody
Notes: Not as 'square' as the rest of the IT department. All good designers seem to have tattoos, piercings, and a fashion sense.

[**Software Developer**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/593)
Respect: Medium
Qualities: Creative, persistent, insatiable thirst for knowledge
Salary: $70,000
Dress: Casual Dress is normally the rule (t-shirt and jeans)
Fun Factor: If you don't have fun being a developer then you have the wrong job; other people might not understand your sense of humor though ;)
Notes: Companies have a lot of developers compared to other positions listed. Therefore your chances of becoming a developer are good if you have the skills and more importantly the desire.

[**Project Manager**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/611)
Respect: Medium
Qualities: Cooperation, leadership, and organization skills
Salary: $60,000
Dress: Business Casual (collared shirt and nice jeans or pants)
Fun factor: This tends to be a high stress position with long hours. If that sounds fun then go for it!

[**Database Developer**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/588)**/**[**Database Administrator**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/60)
Respect: Medium-High
Qualities: Detail-oriented, high business knowledge
Salary: $80,000
Dress: Business Casual
Fun Factor: If processing giant data sets excite you, then this job is for you.

[**IT Security Manager**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/589)
Respect: High
Qualities: Military outlook on life, defensive, pro-active
Salary: $70,000
Dress: Smart, clean dress is very important
Fun Factor: Are you kidding me? This guy is basically a cop!

[**System Administrator**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/429)
Respect: Medium-High
Qualities: God complex, often eat fast food and drink a lot of soda
Salary: $75,000
Dress: If they were allowed to, they would probably dress as World of Warcraft characters!
Fun Factor: Sysadmins can be patronizing; but they can be fun as well, especially after they have a few beers. They are often eager to show others that they are just "normal people". But this is not usually true.
Notes: Never anger a sysadmin! Why? They have access to everything in the company.

[**Software Tester**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/598)
Respect: Low-Medium
Qualities: Detail-oriented, persistent, curious
Salary: $40,000
Dress: Same as developers
Fun Factor: They are normally seen hanging out with developers, trying to talk about bugs.
Notes: Testers play a vital role in software development that cannot be understated. If you don't have a single tester on your team, you are probably in trouble.

[**IT Support Engineer**](https://www.english4it.com/dictionary/popupShow/591)
Respect: Low (except when someone needs help fixing their computer, then it's really high)
Qualities: Must be good at dealing with technically incompetent people
Salary: $35,000
Dress: Casual
Fun Factor: Often an endless source of funny stories about technically incompetent end-users
Notes: Do not kill the end-users!

**1. According to author of the reading, it is impossible to get a good job without a university degree or previous experience.**

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|  | True |
|  | False |

**2. The author claims that deciding which career to pursue is actually the easiest part of the employment process.**

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|  | True |
|  | False |

**3. Lead developers are higher in status than junior and senior developers.**

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|  | True |
|  | False |