

Book Review

Career Management for Scientists and Engineers,

By John K. Borchardt (*American Chemical Society*; 2000), 258 pp., ISBN 0841235252; \$34.95 (hardcover)

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Assessing past professional accomplishments and determining future career goals is a task that many of us undertake only when life's circumstances force us to do so. The book, *Career Management for Scientists and Engineers*, by John K. Borchardt, makes it clear that performing this kind of analysis on a regular basis is an important and necessary task for all scientists at any stage of their career. From students who are trying to land that first job offer to mid-career professionals who are considering a change to an alternative career, everyone needs to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and define both short and long term goals in order to remain marketable and open to opportunities for growth.

The book is organized into three main sections:

- 1) "Professional Skills", in which Borchardt discusses the non-technical skills that must be developed in order to be successful in one's present position as well as marketable if actively engaged in a job search.
- 2) "Today's New Working World", in which the author illustrates why proper career management is so vital in the insecure environment of industrial science created by frequent restructurings and downsizings.
- 3) "Job Hunting", in which the steps of securing a new position are thoroughly covered from search techniques through résumé writing, interviewing and negotiating a job offer.

I found Borchardt's writing style to be clear and easy to read. He consistently provides examples to illustrate his points, all of which are taken from science and engineering settings. The main focus is on industrial careers and only an occasional comment refers to academia, but all levels, from technician to Ph.D. bench chemist or manager, are considered. Attention is paid to the role which technology can play in fine tuning career management, such as the use of the Internet in job searches. Throughout the book, certain

topics are highlighted in side-bars, although the reasons why these topics are set apart from the main text are not always clear. The editorial staff should have followed Borchardt's advice to résumé writers and done a more careful job of proofreading as a number of typos are encountered throughout the book.

Reading the volume cover-to-cover will provide a very comprehensive overview of all aspects of career management; however, this book can also be used as a reference source in which those parts relevant to one's current situation can be reviewed at appropriate times. For instance, a recent graduate who is about to embark on his first position may want to review just the sections that concentrate on developing workplace skills, such as time management and oral presentation techniques. For the mid-career scientist who is not actively seeking a new job but wishes to add variety and challenge to her professional experiences, sections that discuss activities such as participation in professional organizations, publishing in trade journals or maintaining a second job, will be of interest. Both the well-organized table of contents and the index will facilitate the use of the book as a reference guide. Furthermore, lists of additional resources at the ends of each chapter will lead readers to more information pertaining to a specific area of interest.

Even persons who are comfortable in their current positions will be able to extract something from Borchardt's book. His instructions are motivational as well as informative; keep your goals in focus, know your strengths and improve on your weaknesses and a fulfilling career in science is just around the corner.