

Success in the Technology Field is a “how-to” guide for your career. It presents a model of skills and behaviors to help attain your career goals, whether you aspire to be an executive, a leading technologist, or a successful salesperson.

Success in the Technology Field: A GUIDE FOR ADVANCING YOUR CAREER

By Richard A. Spires

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Success in the Technology Field

A GUIDE FOR ADVANCING YOUR CAREER

"An early- through late-career proven guide to select and launch or refocus a strong, successful technology career. It is a book I wish I'd had early in my career."

— **John Reece**, former CIO of Time Warner and the IRS, and former partner at Booz, Allen & Hamilton

Richard A. Spires

“I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a book. Richard’s book is the magic that helped him achieve more than he could have ever dreamed! It is a must read wherever you are in your journey.”

—*Melvin Brown II, Federal Government Senior Executive*

“Richard has done a remarkable job summarizing, in an actionable and practical format, what it really takes to advance your IT career. Having spent most of my career in the IT field, I can relate to and approve of the advice and I wish I had had this guide when I started my career in IT!”

—*Magnus Nylund, chief operating officer (COO)
of Learning Tree International*

“Richard Spires is an experienced and passionate leader. He believes in giving back and supporting the success of others. Through his book, he gives a gift to the IT community by providing a thoughtful and practical guide on being successful in IT. Thank you, Richard.”

—*Renee P. Wynn, former CIO of NASA*

“Richard has distilled his experiences and lessons learned from an impressive career in Information Technology into concise recommendations that are both insightful and common sense. It is destined to become a must read for those embarking on their career in one of the IT disciplines.”

—*Robert Shay, former partner at Ernst & Young and COO
of Capgemini Government Solutions*



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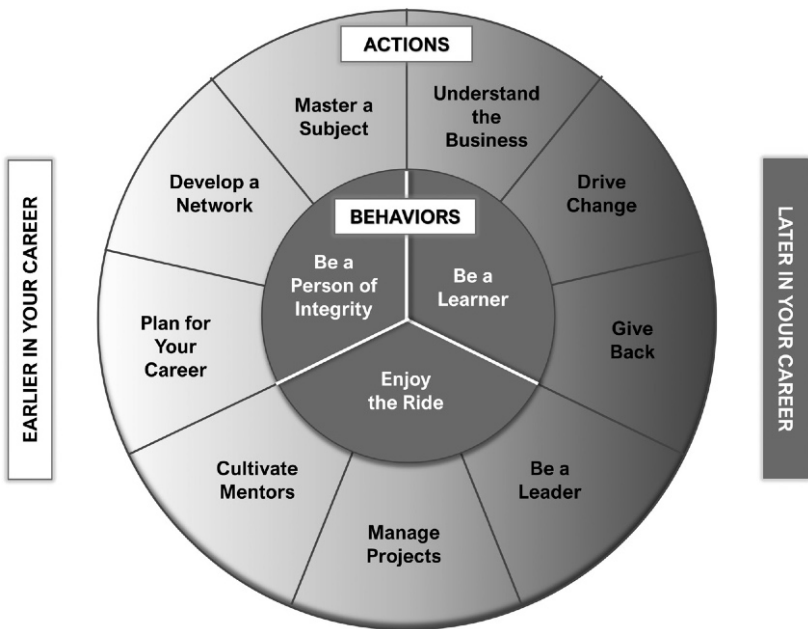
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Chapter 1:

A Career in the Technology Field – Defining Your Success

“There is no passion to be found in playing small—in settling for a life that is less than you are capable of living.”

Nelson Mandela



When we think of someone as being successful in technology, we often think of someone in a chief information officer (CIO) or chief information security officer (CISO) position. Or, for someone working in a company providing technology services or products, success is being a senior partner in a technical professional services organization or even the chief executive officer (CEO) of a product corporation. Undoubtedly, such individuals are successful, having earned such positions through years of hard work and dedication to developing the required skills and abilities for such positions.

Yet, some of the most successful individuals in the technology field never manage others. Some are competent technologists who advance the state of a particular technology or develop system architectures to address exceptionally complex business requirements. And they love the work they do. And others, in sales or business development roles, thrive on finding the match between their corporation's product offerings and appropriate customers, working to ensure the customer derives significant value through the implementation and use of a particular technology-based solution. Individuals in these roles (and others) can be very successful. In technology-related disciplines, there are so many varied pathways to success. What constitutes success in your career—your career goal or goals—is ultimately your decision. You can get advice from others, from mentors, but only you know what inspires you—your passion.

Whatever are your career goals, there are numerous resources, including books and training courses, to support you. For instance, there are many books and courses on leadership and management. Likewise, there are resources available on all facets of technology to help those looking to improve their knowledge and technical skills. There are books and courses for sales professionals and business developers that will train you to sell, from understanding the value proposition to effectively dealing

with and building relationships with buyers.

Interestingly, however, few books address how to succeed in technology-related disciplines, cutting across all the roles, from executive to manager to self-contributor. It seems that some authors and publishers shy away from a broad-based approach because they feel the roles are too diverse in that the skills, abilities, and behaviors needed by a technologist are so different from a manager. They suppose there is little value in emphasizing the commonality and providing insight that can support everyone who works in technology or has a job substantially related to technology. But in my more than thirty-five years of work experience, starting as a technologist and individual contributor and rising to become a CIO and CEO, I have seen skills, experiences, and behaviors that are valuable to all, irrespective of one's current role and aspirations. This book explores those skills, experiences, and behaviors. Based on my own lessons learned and what I've gleaned by observing many successful individuals throughout my career, I've developed twelve recommendations designed to support your career in the technology field, providing advice to help you achieve your goals.

The Twelve Recommendations

Of the twelve recommendations to support those working in a technology-related field, three address your behaviors. These recommendations address how you handle and react in situations. Ideally, adopting these behaviors should be a focus from day one of your career. And these behaviors form the foundation upon which to build a successful career, as well as helping to support you in your personal life.

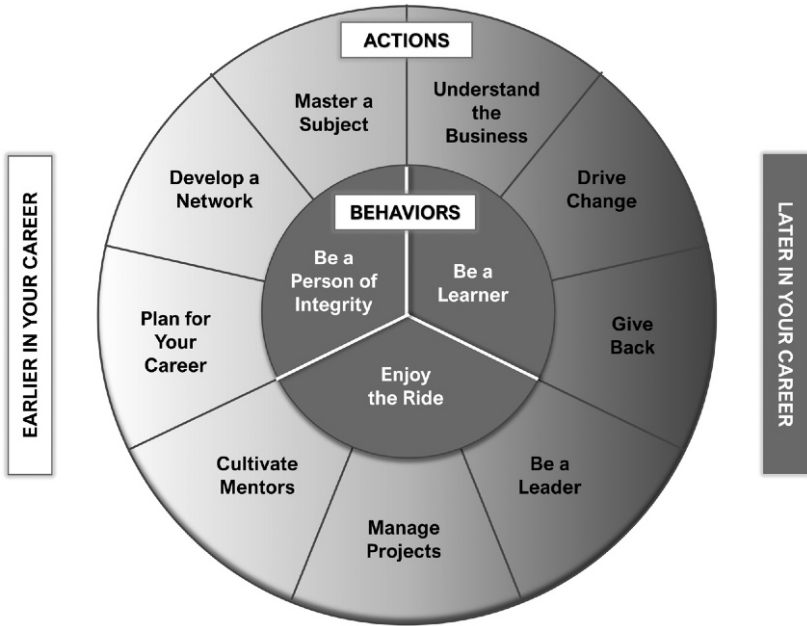
The other nine recommendations are specific actions for you to take. Overall, these actions develop knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) in various subjects that support you in achieving

your career goals. You should think of these recommendations in terms of their proper sequencing. Some of the recommendations are typically actions you will address early in your career, while others typically apply mid- or later in your career. Career paths vary greatly, so it is certainly possible that someone relatively early in their career may need to focus on recommendations labeled as “Later in Your Career.” And it is undoubtedly the case that many of the recommendations labeled “Earlier in Your Career” are actions that you will want to sustain throughout your career.

The recommendations are grouped by career phases to help you visualize your career arc. While easy to understand as you read this book, twelve recommendations are impossible to address simultaneously. As you read, you should be thinking about your career plan over a twenty-to-thirty-year span, but with a focus on actions to take in the next five years. Especially if you are starting or are early in your career, the focus must be on the foundational behaviors and earlier-in-your career actions. These are building blocks for long-term success. Remember that your plan is your own, and there is no optimal plan. But you need to be realistic, as mastery of some of these recommendations is not just about taking a course and gaining a certification. It is about gaining an in-depth understanding of a subject and obtaining work experience over the years, so you are competent in a subject, enabling you to deliver value for your organization.

And adequately planning for your career is not just about obtaining specific technical knowledge and skills, it is also about addressing people-related skills, such as collaboration, management, and leadership, that so many of us technologists undervalue. Interestingly, in Learning and Development circles, sometimes these skills of dealing with other people are labeled “power skills” to showcase their critical importance to both an individual’s and an organization’s overall success.

The following figure depicts the twelve recommendations, grouped by behaviors and actions, displaying the sequencing from earlier to later in your career.



Twelve Recommendations for Professionals in the Technology Field

Below is a synopsis of the twelve recommendations. Each recommendation will be explored in-depth in later chapters.

Behaviors

Be a Person of Integrity – There is Nothing More Important

Are you a person of your word? Are you trusted and respected? If you want long-term success, this is mandatory. Every meaningful action you take and promise you make forges your reputation. If you lack integrity, you will not go far in the technology field, in which there are no short-cuts to success, and anything but truth will be exposed eventually.

Be a Learner – The Rate of Change Keeps Accelerating

One of the great aspects of the technology field is change—what we have available in the palm of our hand today was science fiction twenty years ago! But this rate of change is daunting and forces you to continue working to reskill yourself. It must be considered part of any job you have and part of your career plan.

Enjoy the Ride – Make It a Career, Not a Job

It is still valid, although it may seem a cliché, that people who develop a passion for what they do in their career are much more likely to enjoy sustained success. Passion is infectious and crucial to becoming a leader, whether you are in line management or an individual contributor. So have a passion for what you do in your career, and if you can't, find a new career.

Actions Earlier in Your Career

Plan for Your Career – Be Flexible in Its Execution

Having career goals and associated objectives is essential. You should have a written plan that lays out ultimate career goals along with objectives you wish to meet five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years out. And you should revisit and update your plan every year. Yet you should also be open to opportunities, ones that, in the short term, may significantly alter your plan. Seizing such an opportunity may end up being the best decision of your career.

Develop a Network – A Professional Network

Many of us in technology-related disciplines find developing relationships difficult. Yet business is and will always be a people-oriented endeavor. Working to develop and cultivate your professional network will pay you dividends for decades to come.

Cultivate Mentors – We All Need Them

We can't understand and address our professional weaknesses fully by ourselves. We need help from others. So, as you develop your network, be on the lookout for possible mentors, those who bring different perspectives and are not shy about providing you constructive feedback.

Master a Subject – Be Considered an Expert

The technology field is vast, with many subject areas. It helps if you, particularly earlier in your career, master a subject—to legitimately claim you are an expert in an area of technology or related process discipline. Not only does this burnish your reputation, it also provides perspective on what developing such expertise takes and means—knowledge that is valuable for managers and leaders.

Manage Projects – Understand How to Implement Technology

Whether a corporation, government agency, or non-profit, an organization enhances its capabilities to deliver and better serve its customers or constituents by successfully delivering projects and programs. Organizations might not always call them projects, but all the elements of good project management are needed to ensure the highest probability for success when implementing any significant operational change. Therefore, those in the technology field should learn how and gain experience managing projects.

Actions Later in Your Career

Understand the Business – Apply Technology to Create Value

Some of the most valuable people in any organization today effectively apply technology-based solutions to address business challenges. As one working in technology, how do you maximize your value? You should understand the business you support, the customers or constituents it serves, the value it provides, and

the challenges it currently faces. In doing that, you significantly increase the chance you can bring to the table innovative, yet practical, technology-based solutions that can make a meaningful difference to your organization.

Be a Leader – Work at It

There are, of course, natural-born leaders, but for many of us technologists, people leadership does not come naturally. But that does not mean you cannot be a leader. It requires work, both in learning how to lead and in continuously practicing and improving your abilities.

Drive Change – Start on the Inside

Driving meaningful change in an organization is one of the more challenging assignments you can undertake. As such, it offers significant value potential for the organization and great potential for your career. Yet, there is considerable downside risk. Understanding the risk and making an informed decision on whether to step into a change agent position is crucial.

Give Back – Help the Next Generation

Helping others grow, being a mentor, seeing others succeed—as you advance in your career, these opportunities to support and mentor others become more frequent. By all means, take advantage of these opportunities, for you will not only help others, you will also learn and grow from such experiences. And you will continue to expand and enrich your network.

Using This Book

This book is not a replacement for other resources (including books, training courses, or work assignments) to develop your

skills, abilities, and behaviors. **Think of this book as a companion to other resources, a guide regarding “what” to do to hasten your success in the technology field. Other resources provide you detailed information about “how” to go about it.** For instance, one of the book’s recommendations is that technologists learn how to manage projects. Project management is a mature discipline with numerous resources that can support your learning. With proper training, augmented with the right kind of work experiences, you should be able to, within a five-year time-frame, develop the ability to manage technology-based projects effectively. This book offers you advice on what to do to achieve project management competence—other resources can provide you the specifics on “how” you manage projects.

The twelve recommendations are tangible, with specific items you can immediately include in your career plan. As an example—a theme that weaves through this book is self-awareness. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and understanding them and addressing your weaknesses can have a profoundly positive impact on your career and personal life as well. But how do you become more self-aware, then act on that awareness? Many people struggle to be true to themselves, not recognizing weaknesses that hold them back from the progress they should be making in their careers. The recommendations do address self-awareness, but indirectly. Creating a robust network and cultivating the right mentors provide you tangible, external mechanisms to gain the self-awareness everyone should have.

Another theme that weaves through the book is persistence. It is easy to state “have persistence” as a recommendation. But does it make sense to have persistence if the actual probability of you being successful in an endeavor is exceptionally low? And can you persist in the work if you have no passion for what you are doing? Once you align your innate capabilities (what you are good at) with work you enjoy doing and that gives you sat-

isfaction, you will find your passion. And in doing so, you will undoubtedly have the persistence to guide yourself to success. The recommendations on developing a career plan, cultivating mentors, and enjoying the ride are meant to put you in the best position to find that alignment.

Each of these recommendations, by itself, can be of value to you in your career. **It is planning for your career (covered in Chapter 5), together with the other recommendations working in combination, that provide synergy for advancement and ultimate success.** So have that mindset. What recommendations logically group for you to improve your skills and abilities, advancing you towards what you define as success? Capture those groupings in a career plan with tangible milestones regarding actions you should take. And hold yourself accountable for their execution.

Time is a critical element to consider in your career planning. Early in a career, we tend to be in a hurry, which is an admirable trait. But so is patience. Recognize that most of these recommendations take years to “master,” if that is even the right term. I continue to work on these recommendations myself, thirty-five years into my career. Think of time, from a career perspective, in five-year increments. If you set your mind to it and persist, you can “master” a recommendation in five years. For instance, you can become an expert in a subject in five years—not easy, but possible. And if you do that, think about the progress you will have made in such a short time!

Lastly, use this book as a reference when reviewing your career progress and plans. You should make it a yearly habit to review your career plan. Further, recognize and accept that we all experience hardships and failures in our careers. Plans rarely turn out exactly as initially conceived, and you will experience setbacks that will result in missed milestones in your career plan. Have patience at these times. But when you are at a cross point

or feeling a bit unmoored, refer back to this book and its recommendations to recalibrate your focus on your career. Are there steps you should take to address gaps in knowledge, skills, or abilities? Do you need more hands-on experience in a particular technology or discipline? Are there recommendations in this book that you now need to address? Revise your plan as appropriate, learning from the current setback.

Conclusion

Here are a few last thoughts as you move into the heart of this book. As described at the beginning of this chapter, your career is your journey. No one else can pinpoint your destination nor determine the right steps for you. My approach to supporting you is to relate key events in my journey and those of others, noting what I learned from them, and how that crystalized into the twelve recommendations provided in this book. These recommendations don't define your success or journey, but they help you determine what success looks like for you in the technology field and what steps you should take on your journey.

Key Takeaways from Chapter 1: A Career in the Technology Field

- In the technology field, there are so many varied pathways to success. Your career is your journey, and only you can determine what career success means to you.
- This book provides twelve recommendations to support your career in the technology field, whatever you aspire to achieve.
- The twelve recommendations consist of three behaviors and nine actions. The recommendations are:

Behaviors

- › Be a Person of Integrity – There is Nothing More Important
- › Be a Learner – The Rate of Change Keeps Accelerating
- › Enjoy the Ride – Make it a Career, Not a Job

Actions Earlier in Your Career

- › Plan for Your Career – Be Flexible in Its Execution
- › Develop a Network – A Professional Network
- › Cultivate Mentors – We All Need Them
- › Master a Subject – Be Considered an Expert
- › Manage Projects – Understand How to Implement Technology

Actions Later in Your Career

- › Understand the Business – Apply Technology to Create Value
 - › Be a Leader – Work at It
 - › Drive Change – Start on the Inside
 - › Give Back – Help the Next Generation.
- Think of this book as a companion to other resources, a guide regarding “what” to do to hasten your success in the technology field. Other resources provide you details of “how” to go about it.
 - It is the planning for your career, combined with the other recommendations, that provide synergy for advancement and ultimate success.

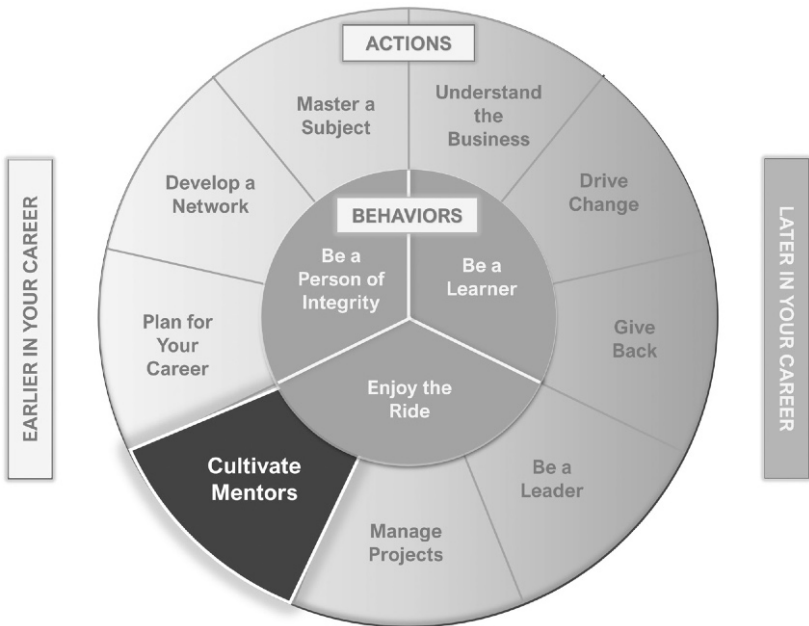
This book’s recommendations help you determine what success looks like for you in the technology field and what steps you should take on your journey.

Chapter 7:

Cultivate Mentors – We All Need Them

“Show me a successful individual and I’ll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don’t care what you do for a living—if you do it well I’m sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor.”

Denzel Washington



It is difficult for many of us to objectively see ourselves the way others view us. This difficulty is not limited, of course, to just those in the technology field. But when it comes to human relationships, many technologists struggle to understand others and behave in ways that will build strong, positive working relationships. Whatever your career goals, having greater self-awareness is vital to success. We all have strengths to leverage and weaknesses that need addressing. Yet many of us struggle to understand ourselves, particularly in terms of what those weaknesses are, let alone how to address them. **A mentor can be incredibly valuable in helping you understand your strengths and weaknesses.** But a mentor is not just a friend or colleague who provides you understanding. A mentor is willing to have difficult discussions with you, offering advice on how best to leverage your strengths and address your weaknesses.

I have had a number of excellent mentors during my career. And today I still count several individuals with whom I interact as mentors—people with whom I can share ideas and who offer sound advice. Early in my career, I looked for mentors who would support my growth in my technical skills, and that was very helpful. Yet I initially failed to understand the value of mentors who could help me improve my interpersonal skills. It was not until my late twenties that I finally recognized the importance of having such mentors. Interestingly, my mentors include a few individuals outside the technical field, including my wife, who have been invaluable in helping me deal with people. They are willing to have difficult discussions with me regarding my behavior and provide me specific advice on how to improve my relationships with others.

You should work to cultivate mentors in all aspects of your professional career. Be humble and recognize that you can always improve, even in areas you consider your strengths. **Make it an explicit objective to develop several mentoring re-**

relationships that can provide you coverage in all aspects of your work. This includes the subject matter you work in, the processes used in your organization to conduct the work, and the interpersonal skills needed to develop strong teams and solid working relationships.

Mentors Early in Your Career

Having mentors when you are new to your profession is essential. Early in your career, you need mentors who can provide advice and feedback in the technical or process subjects you are learning. Like an instructor or teacher in the classroom, these subject-matter mentors can help you rapidly understand many practical aspects of dealing with a particular technology or process discipline, cutting through the theory and providing you advice relevant to the work you are doing. Such mentors can also support you in career development, helping you determine the most appropriate approaches to develop expertise in a given technology or process discipline. And they may help by introducing you to other potential mentors they know that will enhance your growth and experience.

Perhaps just as crucial for you early in your career is to have a mentor who can “show you the ropes” as you learn the basics of appropriate professional behaviors in dealing with fellow employees, at all levels, of your organization. Also, such a mentor can help you deal effectively with customers and partners as well. These are essential behaviors that can propel a young person forward, particularly if you are targeting management positions and, eventually, the organization’s executive ranks.

Gaining an understanding of appropriate professional behaviors is different from relationship-building. For instance, very early in your career, it is almost always the case that you are not in a management role. You are typically in support roles. As such,

you need to understand and learn how to support your managers effectively and the appropriate behaviors you should exhibit in those roles. For example, if you are on a project supporting a customer, you need to be mindful of respecting and supporting the project manager. You should not take actions or make statements that undermine the project manager's views or authority. In private, one-on-one, it is acceptable to question and even disagree with the project manager, but not in front of a customer. This is a simple example, but too often, those entering the workplace have little understanding of such protocols.

Lastly, look for a mentor who will help you cultivate relationships and deal with interpersonal relationship issues. Even if you view your interpersonal skills as a strength, professional relationships differ from typical social and personal relationships. Undoubtedly, you will make good friends at work, but the large majority of your professional relationships are not about friendship. They are about having mutual respect and the capability to work well together toward achieving an objective. As such, early in your career, you ought to cultivate a mentor or two who can help you understand and deal with professional relationships.

Mentors in Mid-Career and Later in Your Career

Once you have ten years of work experience, you will have a much better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. You will also have a more developed understanding of your career goals. You should be taking steps that enhance your capabilities and work to gain experience that supports you in meeting those career goals. Mentors should play an essential role in helping you with this discovery, giving you feedback on your goals, and working with you on the steps you should take to realize your aspirations. This is not to imply you should drop mentors you have cultivated earlier in your career—they can continue to be sounding boards for you in the areas of subject matter and relationship development.

As your career goals more fully crystallize, you will want to seek mentors who are currently, or have been, in roles you are targeting. For instance, perhaps you have been a task manager and are now taking on the leadership of small technology projects. You are enjoying this work, and it is fulfilling to deliver value to customers. You may be a person who would like to run large-scale technology programs in the future. So, you should find and cultivate a mentor who has large-scale program experience. Their perspective and advice are invaluable, because they have walked this journey before. Don't feel obliged to always take their advice or follow the path they have taken, but understanding why they made their decisions provides you useful feedback. If they are strong mentors, they will even share their mistakes and lessons learned along their journey, which is also helpful input as you plan your own journey.

The example described above involves project and program management, but even if you plan to remain an individual contributor, having mentors to support your journey is still essential. Perhaps you aspire to become a leading expert in a particular technology. Having mentors who you respect in that field will support your career development. They can help you determine what job assignments, additional training, research, and professional associations will be valuable to you.

And once you have reached a senior role and perhaps met your initial career goals, the need for having mentors does not disappear. When I took over Learning Tree International as CEO, I needed mentors who could support me as I stepped into a company that was struggling financially. So I looked for and identified an individual with extensive company turn-around experience. He had successfully turned around companies several times as a CEO. Because he had dealt with a number of situations remarkably similar to mine, he became an ideal mentor to me. In particular, he provided sound advice based on his experience with what

did and did not work for him. I was also able to identify another individual with extensive experience in the technical training industry, in companies with product offerings similar to those provided by Learning Tree. This individual offered practical advice for improving our product quality and efficiency. The combination of these two mentors' guidance was quite valuable to me as the Learning Tree CEO.

Cultivating Mentors

Mentors are critically important, but they need to be the right ones. The right mentor is someone with whom you can create a trusting relationship, one in which you feel comfortable sharing your weaknesses and concerns. It is also someone who can provide you unbiased, constructive advice. The advice being unbiased is essential—you must have total confidence that your mentor gives you the best advice they can, free of any self-interest or other influence. Therefore, while you can, and should, have a mentor or two from within your organization, it is also helpful to cultivate mentors outside your organization.

The criteria to be a good mentor set a high bar, so you should expect it will take both time and effort to develop a cadre of mentors who can support you in all facets of your professional life. But how do you find suitable candidates and develop the relationships to the point where you feel confident even to ask a colleague to be a mentor? Undertake the following steps:

- 1. Actively build your professional network** – Your mentors will invariably come from your professional network. The larger and more diverse your network, the more likely you will have network members who can become mentors. This is a primary benefit of building your network, particularly early in your career. But don't do this randomly. Early in your career, you should aim to have at least one men-

tor in each of the three activities described earlier: 1) subject-matter expertise; 2) appropriate business behaviors; and 3) interpersonal relationships. Think about building your network to add individuals who might support you in each of these dimensions. For instance, target a professional association that will enable you to meet people with the appropriate subject-matter expertise. You will most likely find a mentor for appropriate business behavior from someone senior in your organization. And in terms of relationships, think beyond the confines of your professional life. Sometimes, as in my case, a spouse or personal friend can be a mentor on interpersonal relationships.

- 2. Assess and develop a list of possible mentors** – Most members of your professional network will not prove good fits as mentors. Again, it comes down to comfort and trust. While you should have good relations with all members of your professional network, identify those individuals with whom you have a special rapport and are very comfortable. If they also have the right experience and you respect them, both their judgment and what they have accomplished, they are excellent candidates to become mentors. Searching for mentors is not, of course, a one-time exercise. As you continue to develop your professional network, constantly assess new members of your network. And even if you decide that someone does not have the experience and insight you are looking for, years later you might find you would value that person as a mentor. It is another reason to cultivate your professional network.
- 3. Ease into a more formal mentor relationship** – Even if all the signs are positive, and you know a colleague would be a good mentor, be judicious. Some individuals don't feel comfortable in a formal mentor relationship or in becoming too intimate in sharing themselves and their experiences. So,

start by asking for some advice on a small matter and make it informal, as part of a conversation. An experienced person will typically understand where this might lead, and you will quickly know if the individual is willing to become a mentor. This way, you enable an individual to back off gracefully, so you don't harm the professional relationship. If you are pleased with that initial interaction and get back thoughtful and useful advice, ask for additional guidance on another matter. There is no rule regarding when such an individual is now your mentor, but at some point, you should ask the individual if you can turn to them on a reasonably regular basis for feedback and advice.

As described earlier, you should seek to have several mentors who support different aspects of your development. While there is no exact number, be careful not to have too many mentors at any given time. You should cultivate a relationship with each one, so they get to know you well, and you can turn to them regularly to provide updates and get their feedback. Each mentor is an investment of your time. You ask for something special of them, and you need to treat them with respect and invest in the relationship. A close and strong relationship of mutual respect and honesty is a great gift, so choose and nurture each mentor with care and appreciation. It can be challenging to do that if you have lined up too many mentors.

Conclusion

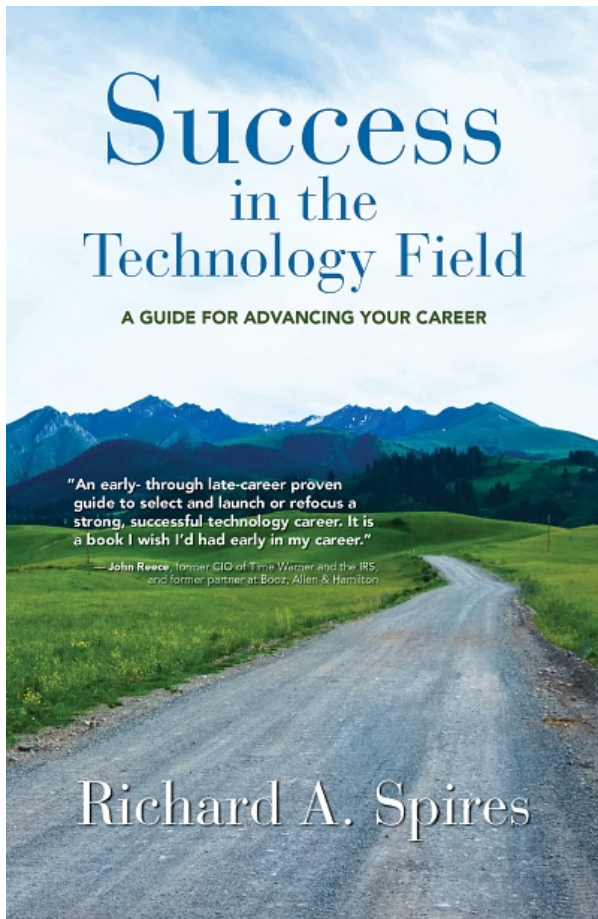
Having several mentors at any given time in your career can be extremely valuable and enlightening. It is natural for us, as humans, to overplay our strengths and downplay our weaknesses. Having trusted mentors who can provide you objective feedback and advice is essential. But having mentors who can support your journey, based on their similar experiences, is even more valuable. Recognize that as you progress, the makeup of your

mentors will shift. That is okay and to be expected. Remember that no matter what your seniority, mentors can still be valuable to you. Please make it a habit to continually be on the lookout for individuals who might be mentors, whether now or potentially sometime in the future.

Key Takeaways from Chapter 7: Cultivate Mentors

- It is difficult for many of us to objectively see ourselves the way others view us. We all have strengths to leverage and weaknesses that need addressing. Yet many of us struggle to understand ourselves, particularly in terms of what those weaknesses are, let alone how to address them.
- A mentor can be very valuable in helping you understand your strengths and weaknesses. But a mentor is not just a friend or colleague who provides you understanding. A mentor is willing to have difficult discussions with you, offering advice on how best to leverage your strengths and address your weaknesses.
- Early in your career, you should aim to have at least one mentor in each of these areas: 1) subject-matter expertise; 2) appropriate business behaviors; and 3) interpersonal relationships.
- How do you find suitable candidates and develop the relationships to the point where you feel confident even to ask a colleague to be a mentor? Take the following steps:
 1. **Actively build your professional network** – The larger and more diverse your network, the more likely you will have network members who could become mentors.
 2. **Assess and develop a list of possible mentors** – Identify individuals with whom you have a special rapport and who have the right experience. You must respect them, both for their judgment and what they have accomplished.
 3. **Ease into a more formal mentor relationship** – Be judicious. Some individuals don't feel comfortable in a formal mentor relationship or want to become that intimate in sharing themselves and their experiences.

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Success in the Technology Field is a “how-to” guide for your career. It presents a model of skills and behaviors to help attain your career goals, whether you aspire to be an executive, a leading technologist, or a successful salesperson.

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