How to launch a tech career, or what they didn’t teach you in computing science school
From the class of CS 1984-1988

Lance McAndrew
BSc ’86
San Jose, CA
Hometown: Okotoks, AB
Organized Computer Science social events using early email on campus—most notable was CS 469, the weekly CS gathering in Room at The Top, RATT. This tradition lives on today!

Chuck Daniel
BSc ’86
Bellevue, WA
Hometown: Eckville, AB
Met Derek and Brent in Lister Hall. When I first walked into their room, instead of clothes in their closet they had beer stacked from floor to ceiling!

Marcel Laforce
BSc ’88
Vancouver, BC
Hometown: Legal, AB
Had sleep-deprivation inspired social times in all-night labs … plus we spent a lot of late nights at RATT.

Derek Iverson
BSc ’87
Pleasanton, CA
Hometown: Wainwright, AB

Brent Gorda
BSc ’87
San Ramon, CA
Hometown: Mayerthorpe, AB
Played in a CBW band

Rob Enns
BSc ’87 (Honours)
Los Gatos, CA
Hometown: Edmonton, AB

Edward Cheng
BSc ’87 (Specialization in Business Application)
San Ramon, CA
Hometown: Edmonton, AB

Jim Moore
BSc ’87
Vancouver, BC
Hometown: Fort McMurray, AB
Met Derek in 1st year Physics class. Met rest of Geeks through him.

Faculty of Science
University of Alberta
Communication is the KEY to everything!

Speaking, managing, interviewing, selling your ideas, recruiting, getting your business funded, selling your business, etc... all depend on the effectiveness of your communication.
Please learn to spell – This will impact your success!

email, stupid Powerpoints, etc. will dominate your working life...
(95% of all your communication will be written)

Nothing looks worse than spelling mistakes or poor grammar.

And.... Get ready to speak in public....

> You will have to know how to speak in front of people.
> You’d better figure out how.
> Happens frequently at work. (First Day)
> You will present your project
> You will teach training classes
> This will affect your success!
> Practice makes perfect.
You Will Be Somebody’s Manager

Congratulations! You’re doing your job so well, you must stop and watch other people do it.

➢ You will do employee reviews.

➢ Have to do budgets!

➢ You may even be a Vice President!

➢ You will sit in many meetings.
How to Interview for a Job

- Take your tongue-stud out
- Wear clean clothes
- Research the company so you know what they do before you go in
- Think of some thoughtful questions to ask
- Act like you really want the job
- No one cares about your grades
You Will Interview People

After you’ve been somewhere for a while, they’ll ask you to interview new candidates for a job

- Think of some thoughtful questions to ask.
- Remember what it was like when you were in their shoes.
India and China

You will go there for work!

- Half of your company may be based there.
- Learn to work with people from different cultures.
You Will Get Laid Off

If you take any risk in your employment, you will either get laid off or the company will close down.

- Work for an insurance company or the government if you’re worried.
What did we study?

Pascal, Algol68, APL, IBM 360 Assembler, Fortran, COBOL, Modula2, C C++

... Your skillset has a five-year life expectancy.
You Will Make A Lot of Money

You had better understand:

- Taxes
- Investments
- Retirement – RRSP’s 401Ks
- Stocks and Options
- Home Ownership
Chuck Daniel, BSc ’86
Find GREAT people to work with!

You can put up with a lot and get a lot done if you have a core set of good people that you like, respect and offer different skills

Find INTERESTING work!
Outside of taking a position because you have bills to pay, try to find the most interesting work TO YOU that you can

Make CHANGES when your responsibilities are LOW!
i.e. no family, kids, mortgage. It’s EASIER to make them earlier but NOT impossible to make changes later.

Consider starting your OWN business!
A business gives you the MOST control over what you do and also how you do it. It also is the MOST lucrative if you create an extremely valuable business that is then acquired.

There is NO job security!
Seriously, don’t ever think you won’t be laid off or let go. It happens.
"Everyone you work with is part of your career network.

Over time, you will know a lot of people.

You will probably work with the same people at different places.”

CS is a fast paced environment with opportunities appearing and disappearing in rapid succession.

The best thing you can do is work and be honest to yourself and your employers.

Knowing what not to do is as important as knowing what to do.
“Pick some ground rules to guide your decisions and hold true to them.

Every company has its challenges. If you are frustrated or unhappy, try to change things first before deciding to leave. Focus on what you can change or control vs. trying to "boil the ocean".

Management is not the only way to advance your career. Most companies have a management and a technical ladder having equivalent level positions on both sides. If your strength is as an individual contributor, don't feel the need to move to management to advance your career.”

"Hang around with the smartest and most passionate people you can find.“
Remember to have fun....