

# LEAPFROGGING

*Making the Jump from Incremental Improvement to  
Earthshaking Innovation*



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# Leapfrogging

## Making Jump from Incremental Improvement to Earthshaking Innovation

James Skinner, Roice Krueger, and Mark Victor Hansen

**“Leapfrogging” will show you how to jump into the future, instantly surpassing the competition and making old ways of doing things completely irrelevant.**

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**Be sure to give this book to anyone who wants to  
Leapfrog ahead of the game, in business and in life!**  
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## Leapfrogging

### The Authors

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**ROICE KRUEGER** co-founded Franklin Covey, the world's largest training company, and has supervised consulting projects for 80 percent of the Fortune 500.

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## Leapfrogging

### Leapfrogging

Have you ever played the game of Leapfrog?

You form a line with each person crouching or sitting down with their arms and legs crossed. You “Leapfrog” by jumping over the person (frog) in front of you (“leaping the frog”), and then they Leapfrog over you.

The key is to go beyond where they are; that’s the Leapfrog.

“Leapfrogging” means to surpass the competition in a giant leap that propels you forward to completely new places all at once, as opposed to incremental improvement which moves you forward a single step at a time.

Through advances in technology, paradigm shifts, and changes in the environment, “Leapfrogging” also means that you can take the lead even when you start from far behind. You can jump right over the

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competition and be in a completely new place. They will be looking around wondering what happened!

Let me give an example. Say you fighting with bows and arrows and all of sudden someone from China comes up to you and says, “Look I’ve got gunpowder.” And you reply, “Don’t bother me. Don’t you see I’m fighting a war here?”

Whoever gets the technology first is going to win.

All of you are on an equal playing field. The equal playing field is awareness. The equal playing field is the only shortage in the planet—thinking, awareness, and consciousness. There are new ways of utilizing it so you can Leapfrog.

The people right now who seem like the invincible competition tend to be deeply invested in the old way of doing things. That’s a very important thing to understand. That’s the biggest advantage you have.

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### The Post Office

The US Post Office is losing billions of dollars a year.

Years ago, the person who sold the first fax machine made the Post Office obsolete with their new technology. You hooked up one of those things to your phone and the Post Office was no longer needed!

The Post Office had all their distribution centers, they had trucks, they had mail sorting. But you see you don't have to compete with the distribution, the trucks, and the mail sorting to completely Leapfrog and be in a whole new place.

And then e-mail Leapfrogged the fax machine.

### Phones

Let's look at phone systems. You have all the old landlines, and to do all the landlines you have to have cable and right-of-ways and all sorts of other stuff. Then somebody comes along and puts one repeater on a hill and we have a phone system that accesses everybody.

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It's an immediate leap beyond where the old phone system was.

Look at what the Internet has done to allow new capabilities. And how different industries have Leapfrogged other industries just because their ability to use the Internet.

### e-Books

Right now, we're about to Leapfrog the entire publishing industry. They are in a 400-year-old paradigm, based on the printing press. Now for us to do a billion books, we just push a button and it's done, that instant—because electronic books completely Leapfrog where the entire publishing industry has been.

You used to need relationships with distributors, and the wholesalers, and bookstores, and printers. You needed to predict and manage all the book returns that you got. For us, there are no returns because there's nothing to send back. The e-book allows us to Leapfrog and completely make obsolete everything that used to be so essential.

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We are ecologically friendly too. We're going to sell a billion books without cutting down a single tree! We might have wasted one small tree to write our notes and put it on paper, but that's all.

For just one of the books we did, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, we planted 250,000 trees at Yosemite Park. There a giant sign that says: Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield were benefactors of our tree day, and planted a quarter of a million trees." If we're using a resource, we're obligated to put it back.

In *Everything I Needed to Know I Learned In Kindergarten*, by our friend Dr. Robert Fulgem, it is written; "If you make a mess you ought to clean it up."

We want to be a green company.

Here's another example.

It used to be that all the watches in the world were made in a little tiny country, in the mountains of



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Switzerland. You needed to be extremely meticulous and spend your entire life looking into a glass and moving gears to be able to make them. You had to understand everything about gears and springs, and all of these things, to be a watch manufacturer. Then some folks in Japan said, “Forget that! We’ll just put it on a quartz chip.”

But wait, the Japanese didn’t invent quartz. The Swiss invented quartz, and they did it in 1968. The Swiss invented the quartz watch, but they did not patent it. So the Japanese just put the whole watch on to a chip, because the Swiss already told them how to do it.

The Swiss were so invested in the springs and gears couldn’t see the future.

At the time the Swiss had 95% of the watch market. After the quartz watch came out from two little companies called Casio and Seiko, the Japanese had 95% of the watch market.

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Because the Swiss didn't make use of the technology that they had invented themselves, they got Leapfrogged with their own technology.

Hopefully this concept is starting to make sense to you.

You can see all the different ways you can be Leapfrogged or that you can Leapfrog someone else.

At one time, there were entire regions where the largest industry was the manufacture of eyeglasses. Then someone comes along and says. "We don't actually have to have all these frames and everything. We can stick the lens directly onto the eye."

Then someone else came along and invented LASIK surgery, and now we can do away with the need for both glasses and contacts.

Now let me take you to the next level, that's a real break through. An ophthalmologist named Dr. Donald Harrison invented something called Permavision. At

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least that is the newest name; he's gone through three or four different iterations. Dr. Harrison's found an enzyme that you can put on the pupil to make it malleable. Then you put a hard contact lens on, and in 20 minutes your eyesight goes back to 20/20. This works whether you are nearsighted, farsighted or astigmatic. Then he puts on another hardening enzyme. The hard lens sends out a series of inputs that are all read on a computer. When read-out hits 20-20 , he takes the contact off and you never need contacts again for the rest of your life. That's all it takes to correct your vision. This procedure is going to get us all back to seeing normally again.

So who is going to figure out how to Leapfrog this?

It will happen. Someone will find the way to beat even this new technology.

Let's look at another example; Fuji film and Kodak were competing for years. They were always looking at each other, asking how they can make film better and better. Now how many of you use film?

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Digital cameras just incredibly Leapfrogged film cameras. So now we don't need film for our cameras at all. It's not about who has the best film!

Once you see how Leapfrogging works, you realize there are going to be a ton of other businesses going out of business.

In our country one of the fastest growing businesses is Smugmug, if you go to [www.smugmug.com](http://www.smugmug.com) and type in Mark Victor Hansen you can see all my pictures. On our Africa trip we took 17,000 pictures. Smugmug cost me \$150, for a lifetime membership. I get to put all the pictures I want, of anything I want, of myself, my family, my staff, my companies, *anything* on there, and they stay there forever. If you want Smugmug to print out a picture, they frame it and send it out to you. It is one of the fastest growing companies in the country.

In China there is \$15 disposable phone that lasts as long as you want. Then you just take out the Sim card and put it into another disposable phone.

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The same thing is going to happen with computers, which will be everywhere. All you will do is carry your little thumb drive and put it in the computer. Your thumb drive is going to have your medical history, your life history, and your value history, all safeguarded to you for privacy. All you do is put it into another computer and everything will be available to you no matter where you go.

You can Leapfrog a competitor, you can Leapfrog an entire industry, and countries can Leapfrog other countries to go from primitive to completely advanced—and all what used to be the advanced nations will wonder what happened.

So the thing that you want to start thinking about is “How do I get into the business of Leapfrogging?”

### Start Experimenting

You need to start experimenting with new technologies and new ways of doing things early. You don't want to be on the back end of the wave when it's already

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crashed down on you. You want to be what's called an early adopter.

Some people think that's a negative term. They believe it means you're out there experimenting, spending a lot of money.

But in reality, the early adopters are not necessarily the ones who pay all the money to develop the technology. They are merely the first ones to learn how to use a new technology first; and that puts them out in front.

You don't need to invest a lot of money or a lot of effort, but invest just a little bit very early on so you start to understand it.

I started experimenting with electronically delivered subscription services six years ago. It was the front of the wave, and it is leading into all the things that we are doing now. We are still doing our six year old video encoding process, which is better than what you see on CNN and Yahoo today!

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I was at a seminar back in the mid 70's, and this individual came into the room. He had guts, he was a futurist, and he said, "It will be as important for your children to use a computer as it is for you to use a telephone today."

Now at that point in time, there were very few computers in the world. I immediately went out and I bought one. And today I'm asking myself, *What is on the horizon that my grandchildren will need to know that is going to be as important to me as a computer?*

What can I experiment with?

What do I need to be involving myself in?

What's going to be as important as anything I can think of?

There are all kinds of things coming down the highway.

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I'll give you a really interesting example of one these and it paid big dividends to the people who bothered to notice.

People started to see that cell phones were going to be more than cell phones. So I have one friend in Japan who thought people might at some point in the future want to play video games on their cell phones. This was before anyone was thinking of this stuff. He decided to experiment with the idea a bit.

At that time the most popular game was Tetris. He went to Tetris and said he wanted the rights to distribute Tetris to cell phones. And Tetris was going; "Fine, but nobody has ever played a video game on a cell phone. It's never going to happen." They gave him a license to put Tetris on cell phones. Now he has 3 million users in Japan that pay him \$3 a month to play Tetris on their cell phones. That's \$9 million a month, which comes out to be \$108 million dollars a year in passive, recurring income!



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He was willing to experiment in front of the curve, he now has a passive income stream that just comes to him like a wave.

You want to start experimenting early.

Are all your experiments going to work out? The answer is NO. That's why just you invest a little bit.

My friend said, "I'm just going to try and get the rights to get the video game that's selling the most right now." He could have gone out and tried to do them all, but that would have been a pretty big experiment.

Instead he just got one and it made him mega wealthy.

## Don't Become Emotionally Invested in the Old Ways

The biggest reason people get Leapfrogged, is they become emotionally invested in old ways of doing thing. You'll know when you're getting into this rut. It's when you become too good at something.

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That's the problem in America right now; people have become comfortable. Our phones are five years behind Japanese and Korean phones because our phone companies have a vested interest in outdated technologies and systems.

Don't get emotionally invested in the way you are doing things right now.

If you run stores, don't get so emotionally invested in your stores that you can't use the Internet. How many major department stores have a major share of commerce on the Internet? Zero! What's up with that?

They had all of the supplying relationships, and they already had the shipping capabilities. But they all love their stores.

I sat with the Board of Directors of one of the largest department stores in the world, and I said, "You guys are completely myopic." Their response was, "Well, not everyone is going to shop on the Internet." I said,

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“You’ve completely missed the point. What happens if 10% of your customers leave and shop on the Internet? You’re toast!”

There are very few companies that can sustain even a 10% loss in their current market. All the profit margin is on the last sale, especially when you are running a store; the fixed costs are huge!

You’ve got fixed costs, and you’ve got fixed staff requirements, and all the profit is on the last 10%, or 15% of sales. So if just 10% of people go to the Internet, department stores are dead.

Well, they didn’t get the message. They ended up having to close down their biggest store to get their costs down.

When I needed an LCD screen. I did not have time to go shop for it. I had a perfect place to put it. It looked like it was designed for an LCD. So I get on the Internet look up what the best product is. I found my LCD at a store in my area. I gave them my credit card

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number, pressed the button, it was delivered to me the next day.

At first everyone was nervous about Internet shopping. If at that time there had been takashimaya.com, or harrods.com, or marshfields.com, how many of you would have rather shopped there with a name you knew rather than where you ended up shopping?

The existing stores could've owned 100% of the Internet space.

Just think about it.

Think about the huge opportunity for wealth creation that they completely missed because they liked doing it the old way.

## **Put Yourself Out of Business Before the Competition Does**

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If the rate of change inside your organization is not as fast as the rate of change outside your organization, you're dead.

You must be innovative and changing internally. And that means Leapfrogging. You are out there to Leapfrog your competition.

If you have a department inside your organization that's screaming about what some other department is trying to do, give the budget to the department that is being screamed at. Because the old department guys are worried that their business is going to be adversely affected by what the new department does.

If the new department doesn't do it, the competitors are going to. So do you want to be collecting that money internally, or do you want your competitor to be collecting it externally.

You've only got two options in that case. You can get the new way of doing things and get the revenue for

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it. Or your competitor can do it for you and you get forgotten.

If you were running a landline-based telephone company and your competitors went to cellular so that people could carry their phones with them, that would scare you senseless. You have got to get into that business.

Well, if I was delivering all these books in hard form, and it cost \$20 a book, and our competitors came out with 101 books of the best information on every subject for \$1, that would scare me senseless.

I live in a city and I have been waiting and waiting for DSL (high-speed Internet) to come to my neighborhood.

So all this time I have been using other archaic means of getting internet into my little cubby hole of a house. And so we built a cabin an hour away in the top of the mountains, it's a long distance out there. As they start construction, I think it would be smart for me to

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install a telephone here so they don't have to go running up and down the mountain to where they can get cell phone service, there is no cell phone service up there. So I ordered it from the telephone company. They immediately install the line. The lineman as he is installing looks up and says, "Will this do?" I said, "Fine." He said, "By the way, in the future when you get this built, would you like to have DSL, high speed Internet installed here?" I said, "Of course I would, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, the fiber optic line is right there in the road in front of your house, we can connect it right now." Now think about this. You are high in the mountains in a rural community and they have Leapfrogged, they have moved ahead of what is available down in the valley.

Five or six years ago, nobody had spas. Today nobody can open up any hotel anywhere in the world without a spa. If you want to have a quality hotel, 3 star rating or above, you have got to have a spa. It is the new minimum. In the same way, the bar has been raised at the country level, at the community level, the business level, and the supplier level.

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You need to start playing this game or you are going to get Leapfrogged!

### **Realize Your Sunk Costs are Sunk**

How you view your costs is a major area organizations get themselves into trouble. They have invested so much in the old infrastructure, they are afraid to transform it. So they just start throwing more money at it. And what do they get? SUNK!

Any costs that have already been spent are over and done. It's in the past. You are not invested in it just because you used to spend money on it. That is a completely outdated mode of thinking and it no longer works. But countries do it, and companies do it. They spent so much money to do it the old way, they won't change.

Well, you need to be able to change on a dime. It's called zero-based thinking: "If we had not done it already would we do it today?" If the answer is no, you



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need to get un-emotionally, and un-financially invested in it.

The telephone companies, if they had really been paying attention, should have sold off their entire landline network when they saw cellular coming.

There was a time in the landline peak at which people would have bought the network at a very high price. Then the old companies could have bought all of the cellular technology for 10% of what they sold their landlines for, and then they would own the entire market today.

Do you see what I am saying? This is how you play business at the highest level.

## Hire Young People and Give Them Freedom to Rock the Boat

Don't hire old thinkers in your company. Hire young thinkers. Your Board of Directors needs to have some teenagers on it.

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Celestial Seasoning Tea Company, run by my good buddy Mo Siegel, always had a nine-year-old consultant. The nine year old would say, “This isn’t going to work, nobody is going to buy that tea.” As a result he was first to the market with green tea in our country, and the first with white tea, which has higher anti-oxidant content than green tea. Now he is going to be the first to the market with a brand new tea making machine that will make tea even better.

If you want to Leapfrog, you need people in your organization that think radically different from everybody else. Those are people who have no investment and have spent no time in the old way. If they spent any time in the old way, they are already corrupted. They really are.

You can get really young people who just have no history. “Landlines? Why would I be interested in landlines? I just want to make a phone call.” Or get people from different cultures, from different countries, from different industries. You want those people on your team.

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If you are running a publishing company and you bring in a young guy who has grown up on the Internet, he's going to be looking at the printing press and saying, "I don't understand this thing. What do you use it for?" "Well, we use it to print stuff on paper." "Why would you do that?"

He's going to ask a completely different set of questions.

Let me give you an inexpensive way of bringing young talent into your organization. One of the greatest locations to find these young thinkers is the university. So you make a little advertisement: "In our organization we are looking for interns. It pays minimum wage. Internships are three to six months." Then you put them on the teams, you give them responsibility, and guess what, and you give them the right to challenge anything that you are doing.

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Trust me, they will challenge you. And I will guarantee you they will give you innovations you have not thought about yet.

The same thing applies to gender. Make sure that you have women on your Board, and men on your Board, and people with radically different viewpoints.

I am still waiting for the country that is going to come out and insist that 20% of the parliament needs to be under the age of 25, and 20% needs to be over the age of 75, and 50% have to be women, and 50% have to be men. And it is really going to get the mix of thinking.

Right now we have unilateral, uni-dimensional, uni-polar thinking. Which is really great until you get Leapfrogged.

## $I=DC^2$

Dee Hock, founder of Visa card, taught me the  $I=DC^2$  equation. I is the ability to store, process, and use information, your informational capacity.

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Your informational capacity is basically your capacity to make a decision. Our environment is constantly throwing challenges at us that require us to gather information, process information, and make an effective decision.

If the decision is the wrong one, we die.

D is diversity. In any system the capacity to process information comes first from your diversity.

C is complexity. So if you don't have diversity and complexity built into your organizations, your information processing is not going to work.

Thus your ability to deal with the environment is entirely dependent on the diversity of thinking available in your management team and the complexity of the organizational structures you have in place to support them!

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### So What?

Every new technology is inferior to the old technology. Memorize that, and then add two more words: “At First!”

So when CDs came out, everyone in the audio world said the record sounds better.

So what!

Everybody in the record business said, “We are not going to press CDs,” and in one year they had to lay off all of their people.

Leapfrogging sneaks up on you. The day you are lazy, and the day you are sitting on your laurels, you’re done for.

I was recently working with a wonderful musician, and he was bemoaning how vinyl records have far better sound. He told me, technically, exactly why that was. But I noticed when he went back and went to his room,

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he picked up a CD player, plugged in his ear phones and listened to it.

And let's face it, MP3 files do not sound as good as CDs.

But so what!

The fact is, you can't carry a thousand CDs in your hip pocket.

New dimensions of competition are emerging. You need to be aware of what they are. It is not about listening to it in your living room on your Hi-Fi stereo system anymore. It's about can you take it jogging? Can you listen to it on the airplane? Do you get to see pictures and movies while watching it?

And you need to be saying, SO WHAT! You need a big sign in your office that says: "So What!"

When people are telling you the old way is better, remember this: the old way is better only at first.

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When we had horses, we rode our horses across country. The car had limitations. Cars couldn't go over all those bumps and all those hills and all those trails. So we created a new way of doing things by building paved roads.

In Japan, now they are distributing novels on cell phones. And you are all going, "You can't read a novel on a cell phone." But it's already a huge industry. And it changes the way you write a novel.

The future of all books is going to be smaller, and we are going to be the front end of this.

Think about Charles Schultz and Peanuts the comic strip. That is basically just a four-frame novel, which went on for 40 years. They made 50 million dollars a year doing four frames a day. You got to hear Charlie Brown's life story, 4 frames at a time.

It's just like politicians are allowed bite-sized pieces of verbiage. When we had to listen to a politician for an



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hour, he had to have something to say. But we moved the technology, and now he is on the news for 30 seconds max. If he has one clever sound byte, he can look pretty intelligent.

Media-genic is a brand new term. It didn't exist three years ago. Media-genic means, "Do the look good in short sound bytes?" Because unfortunately, we are making our decisions in those terms. You need to remember that every new technology creates new ways of doing things. We got MP3, and we started to listen to music in a new way.

## You Will Get Leapfrogged

Everything is going to get Leapfrogged.

Are you going to Leapfrog, or is someone else going to do it? The choice is yours, but it is going to happen.

You yourself are going to get Leapfrogged. So you must accept, own, embrace, and rejoice in the fact that you are going to have many, many careers.

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If you go back several years, Leapfrogging didn't happen very quickly because we did not know how to do it.

You might have been able to go a whole lifetime for example as a blacksmith in your community.

But not anymore. Because something is going to Leapfrog you. Something is going to make you irrelevant, obsolete, and completely un-interesting to all consumers at some point in time.

If you are un-interesting to consumers you are not going to get paid at the end of the month, so you are going to need a new career.

Get used to it. Get over it. Accept it, embrace it and rejoice in it and celebrate it.

Because how boring is it to have to spend 100 years doing one thing?

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You just have to prepare, and this is how you do it: You expose yourself to new ideas, and you try and do that in as many different ways there is as possible.

Let me give you a danger signal that will cause you to think preparation.

If you are dependant upon your current job in your life or your role in life and that is all you know how to do, and you are afraid to let go of it, you are in danger.

When I was growing up, my mother taught me what I would call our family values, and one of those values was simple. She said you must get a skill that makes you employable. As soon as you get a skill that makes you employable, you must get another skill. As soon as you get a second skill that makes you employable, you must get a third skill. If you do this, you will never want for money in your life.

I started taking that to heart.

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When I was 11 years old, I learned surveying. The first public seminar that I ever attended was at the age of 12. It was a surveyor seminar. I show up at this seminar as a 12 year old boy, and the gentlemen at the registration desk looks up and says, “Sonny what do you want?”

I said, “I am here for the seminar.”

“What seminar?”

“The surveying seminar.”

“You work in land surveying?”

“Yes I do.”

“Okay, what’s your name?”

I told him my name, he looked on the list and said,  
“Oh, you’re here.”

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He gives me my materials. I go in to the room, and I sit down at a table. Then all the surveying guys come in. These guys work on construction crews and they've been around civil engineering, and they are all quite a bit older than me.

One of them sits down next to me and says, "Hey sonny, what are you doing here?"

"I am here for the seminar."

"You work on a survey crew?"

"I do."

"What's your job?"

"I'm a rear chainman."

"Really. I'm a head chainmen. Nice to meet you."

I had developed a skill. I could work on a survey crew.

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When I was 14 years old, I moved into the drafting department and I learned how to draw mechanical and electronic devices. That was my second skill.

Then I learned how to speak Japanese. I became a professional interpreter. So that was another skill that I had.

If you develop one skill after another, you'll never want.

But if you think that you have one skill and that that's going to be enough to carry you through, you need to be afraid—very afraid.

I remember working with Stephen Covey. He would ask this question over and over again: "What books are you reading? How well are you exercising? What are you doing to improve yourself?" He called it *sharpening the saw*, if you know the Seven Habits.

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Once a year minimum, you need to write your resume. And the conditions under which you write this resume are going to be somewhat different from how you have done it in the past: you can't write anything that happened more than 12 months ago. This will enlighten you as to whether or not you are keeping up with the pace of your own life.

You need to write a resume as if nothing ever happened before one year ago.

You may have gone to Harvard, Stanford, or Oxford 20 years ago. It doesn't matter. What education have you received in the last year?

You may have had phenomenal work experience 10 or 15 years ago; I don't care. I want to know what projects have you worked on and what results have you produced in the last year.

You need to earn the right to work another year based on your resume from the last year.

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In addition, I want you to project forward a year. What are the new skills, what are the new assignments, what are the new projects, what are the new achievements, what are the new monuments, what are the new celebrations you are going to have?

Let me show you how to make this exercise very real.

Once a year, minimum, resign from your job. Do this emotionally and mentally. Walk home, pull out some paper, and write your resume. Now by the way, if you are feeling really good, after you get through with the resume, you can actually resign! Don't sit around and complain about your boss, don't sit around and complain about the conditions. Because you are in charge of your life, they aren't.

I once became the president of a company that was a subsidiary of a publicly-traded US firm. Roice was actually the VP in charge of international of that company, so I was working under him.



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The day that I accepted that assignment, I tendered my resignation to Roice. I said, “Anytime that you feel I am not the most suited person on the planet to be sitting in this chair, just fill in the date.”

All he had to do was fill in the date, and I was gone. That creates a whole different mindset of how you see things. You don’t become dependent upon the world.

I felt better about myself then in any other job. They could get rid of me at any time; I was there because they wanted me.

The last time I resigned from an organization, I sat down and I listed 12 wonderful opportunities I could act on. Actually, I am not employed anymore. I am unemployed and I love it. I love the freedom of unemployment.

But there is a responsibility that comes with that. Because I know that I must keep myself in a position to be able to Leapfrog.

## Leapfrogging

When you become prepared, the opportunities come to you! In droves.

I want you to choose to Leapfrog. Choose to jump beyond the boundaries and beyond the conditions and limitations that's ever been imagined before by anyone in or out of your industry, in or out of your company, or the competition; to jump to the next level, take things completely to the next level. If you continue to jump from level to level, you will have more fun in your life than you could ever possibly have by trying to choose a static existence that is no longer attainable.

It's the deep enjoyment of contributing to the lives of others, improving, helping them be better, putting new products and services out on into the marketplace that you enjoy doing. Some of it is work, some of it is sweat, and you know you are going to be Leapfrogged again.

But this is the most exciting way to live your life, and the most exciting time to be alive in human history!

## Leapfrogging

With best wishes,

James Skinner, Roice Krueger, Mark Victor Hansen

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