



Profiles of Computer Scientists



Lee Oeth

**Senior Engineer, Quality Assurance
Qualcomm, Inc.
San Diego, CA**

Education:

Undergraduate coursework in Computer Science and Economics, San Diego State University

Job Description:

Senior Engineer in the System Testing Department, writing and executing test programs.

Advice to Students:

"Having an understanding of psychology or human interactions or just what's frustrating people is important."

Video Transcript:

"Well, I've worked in a lot of different companies, large ones and small ones, and there are differences in both. The small ones it's easier to get things done that you can go talk immediately to the person you need to and just have a quick conversation and get things taken care of. But, then a large company you have a lot of resources that you might not have in a small one that, in a small one nobody might know how to do something, whereas in a large one you can get in touch with an engineer who's specific to that task."

Interview:

Lee Oeth's work at Qualcomm is very people oriented. Working on quality assurance for the Eudora e-mail server, he always has to think of the customers' needs. He is concerned with "making sure that it's easy to use and it's understandable and it's not frustrating. I want people to have a good experience using my products." Oeth explains that, to work in quality assurance, an engineer "has to understand what people in the real world want from a product, software or hardware. It's very easy inside a company to get in the mindset that 'this little problem or this little bug that you have to work around is acceptable.' But an ordinary person would find it very frustrating or non-intuitive. So having an understanding of psychology or human interactions or just what's frustrating people is important." Oeth has other concerns besides making products more user friendly. He needs to stay informed about the kinds of features customers want added to products, such as address books or calendars. Moreover, he has to stay abreast of the competition. "We have to keep up with all the new technologies. We have to see what the competition is putting in their products: see how they're putting together a user interface, how they're dealing with their customers. All those things are things that we have to keep up on and integrate into what we're doing." Without a doubt, Oeth's business is a people business.

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