

Careers

Surprising Six-Figure Jobs

Tom Van Riper, 08.03.06, 12:30 PM ET

Want to make six figures? You're probably thinking you've got to work on Wall Street, a law firm or have gone through years of medical school to earn that kind of a salary. While all that helps, we found some surprising jobs that pay \$100,000 or more. Even for those without an advanced degree, there are ways to hustle for a big paycheck.

Time-tested skills are still in demand. If, for example, you think typists are as outmoded as typewriters, you'd be wrong. A skilled typist who's willing to train intensely to get up to about 200 a minute will qualify to be a court reporter--a highly specialized skill always in demand. There are only 50,000 to 60,000 of them in the U.S., according to Labor Department statistics, and job openings are expected to grow steadily through 2010. The national median salary is \$62,000 annually, though it tops \$100,000 in many cities. And some are surprised to discover that only about a quarter of reporting jobs are actually performed in a court room. The skills translate to lucrative gigs like broadcast captioning and real-time reporting for Web casts.

Elsewhere, mining companies sometimes don't even require a college degree for a mine manager position, achievable for those who started in lower positions who show a knack for organization skills. These managers, who average \$106,000 annually, plan out procedures for mining projects, from setting budgets to enforcing deadlines.

Not every well paying job in publishing is in editorial. Traditional pressmen and printing plant operators still command big bucks in some markets. In New York and other big cities they make over \$30 an hour, which means six figures is possible with overtime. And it's well earned--the skills needed for the job require a four-year apprenticeship. One caveat: Bureau of Labor statistics show that the industry employs only 191,000 printing machine operators these days, down from over 300,000 five years ago.

For anyone interested in white collar work, consider one of the fastest growing career paths: the "professional coach." No, not the sports kind (who easily make six and often seven figure incomes), but those business and life coaches who try to provide a confidence lift to struggling entrepreneurs and aspiring novelists. About 20% of the 10,000 registered coaches earn six figure incomes, according to estimates from industry veterans. No special degree or training is required. And while some provide specific expertise, such as those hired by large companies to train a sales staff, others rake in money from those looking for little more than a cheerleader as they open a business or try their hand at writing a book. And along with the growth of coaching come derivative businesses that cater to them.

"Coaching is exploding," says Dan Janel, president of Great Teleseminar, a business that caters to tech-savvy coaches by handling the production work needed to perform remote seminars via the TV screen. Janel said his business was earning six figures itself within 13 months, thanks to the plethora of coaches popping up.

Another business spawned by coaching, naturally, is coaching the coaches. Christian Mickelson, who started as a small business coach in San Diego seven years ago, now helps wannabe coaches get their businesses started through his Web site, CoachingBusinessRocketLauncher. He says the key to six-figure success in coaching is finding a specialty and sticking with it.

"Be a business or life coach but not both," Mickelson says. "You need to realize why people hire coaches; it's not about having some super-awesome life, but because they have a specific problem they want to solve."