

## WHAT TO DO AFTER A LAYOFF



The news on the labor front has been depressing lately. Layoffs seem to be occurring everywhere and the unemployment statistics keep inching up. If you were one of the latest victims of a layoff, times like these can be challenging to say the least. The question is what to do next? Personal experience and working with unemployed workers has taught me a few lessons over the years. Here are some suggestions you may want to keep in mind.

Take some time to get your personal bearings. Layoffs can be traumatic. Some psychologists even go so far as to describe losing a job in identical terms and stages to handling the grieving of a close loved one. No matter what your mental circumstances about your loss, make sure you are ready to [start a job search](#). I went to a job interview three days after my own personal layoff. It was a disaster. I was ill prepared to take on rigors of the mental chess game required. Make sure you are up to the emotional roller coaster that a job search can offer. Also, make sure you have worked through any anger, disappointment or public hurt over the job. Public display of that in any format can definitely put a new job search in a negative tailspin.

Get your financial house in order. Knowing your personal finances and understanding how long you can literally afford to conduct a job search is crucial. Understanding your financial needs can play an important role in how much luxury you can afford in job selection as it comes to type and location. I have known some folks even go so far as to set benchmarks in terms of number of week of unemployment used or savings exhausted to influence exactly how they conduct their job search. Getting a handle on your cash flow and understanding its impact on your job search is important.

Make a plan for your job search and be dedicated to it. Searching for a job IS a full time job. Get yourself organized. Get your resume done, figure out who, what, when and where you are going to look for work. Planning some logical measurable steps in how you are going to conduct your job search are important on a number of different levels. Having a plan keeps you from making embarrassing mistakes or wasting time duplicating your efforts. Equally important is that planning does give you personal benchmarks to measure your own progress, which can be important from a morale standpoint. Knowing where you have been and what you have done can give you some sense of accomplishment during those times when job offers aren't flowing your way. Also, adjust your plan as you go. You will make mistakes. You will learn more as you go along. No effective job search strategy is on target from the start.

Start your networking NOW! In this labor market, it truly is who you know and how soon you know which can make the difference. You need friends in all sorts of places to keep their eyes and ears open for opportunities for you. Often people get work because they were referred after a friend saw an internal job posting or maybe a rumor of an additional hire. Recognizance information like that is so very crucial for you to stay ahead of competition. So start telling everyone you know and trust you are looking for work. From personal experience, I know that can be hard. You can still feel guilty about not working even though it is not your fault. There are subtle ways of working your unemployment in many conversations without wearing a big sign or dumping your tales of woe out for the world. Rest assured, once you get out there talking you will be amazed by those who have shared your circumstances along with the wealth of information you can get about jobs.

Working at [finding a job](#) can be hard, frustrating, humiliating and above all a great rewarding personal journey. It's a great time to take stock of yourself and figure out where to head next. Keep things in perspective, stay grounded in reality and solicit as much help as you can get. You will find work eventually.