

Dealing with Lay-offs

Millions of people have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic and more are likely to be laid off in the coming weeks. While these layoffs can cause anxiety, there are certain positive things we can do to navigate through this, for this too shall pass

1. Having a strong Mind-Set.

Being smart about the job search and managing the stress of being unemployed requires a strong mind-set. That mind-set can't be achieved if you're preoccupied with shame about your layoff.

The number one mistake is assuming that this layoff is about you or some failing of yours. It almost never is and there's almost never anything you could have done to protect yourself. We like to come up with those reasons to give ourselves a sense of having control over the situation when we never had any, but the best bet is to pay attention to the fact that you do have control over what you are going to do next.

2. Negotiate with your former employer.

When most people get laid off, they feel thankful to get any kind of severance package. But like with job offer, failing to negotiate your severance terms often leaves money on the table. While you may feel too fired up (or scared) to negotiate

You often have power to negotiate your severance offer, so be ready to ask for more. Propose a counter offer — this may mean more pay, longer healthcare coverage, bonus pay out, maintaining company accommodation for a longer period, etc. You may be able to get something better, and it's worth a try.

3. Take everything you need and are allowed to from your previous job

The biggest mistake people make after finding out they've been laid off is they don't take information that could help them. No, you should not be stealing company intellectual property or any confidential data. When you leave an organization, you should make sure that you have contact information for any relevant professional relationships, the measurements of how effective your contributions to projects were, as well as any work samples you can take with you for your portfolio.

Also, take physical or digital copies of your documentation including payslips, relieving letter, any last increment, promotion or achievement letter, and recommendations.

4. Address your financial hurdles.

Something else you should handle right after getting laid off: addressing your impending financial situation, securing health insurance, requesting deferments on hefty loans right away and planning your short /long term finances. It can feel overwhelming, especially if you've just experienced the loss of your income, but all of these things take time — more time than you think they will — and it will be time and money lost if you don't work on them immediately. Clearing these tasks from your to-do list right away gives you more time to focus on applications later on and can set your mind at ease, allowing for the mental peace you need to do the job search well.

5. Reach out to your Network

While our first instinct while being unemployed may be embarrassment, experts suggest letting your network know right away that you're looking for work. Remind yourself that being laid off isn't a moral failing — and your network doesn't think so, either.

Even friends who don't work in the same field can have people in their networks that they could introduce the job seeker to. The more people you have looking out for you, the quicker you'll land a job.

6. Use Social Media in a Constructive way

The biggest mistake people make after being laid off is taking to social media to complain. It's understandable to be upset and frustrated about what has happened, especially in the COVID-19 era. However, social media accounts are still public spaces and being vengeful on social media is not a good idea — it makes you look unprofessional — there are ways you can mobilize your platforms for your own good.

Let your followers and connections know that you have been laid off and are seeking new job opportunities. Include a quick list of your skills or a link to your portfolio and a way for people to get in touch if they hear about openings. If you're working on anything special, highlight that project. Engage in relevant Twitter chats in your industry to build up your following. Establish yourself as a thought leader by writing articles on LinkedIn or starting a podcast. Be positive and constructive, showcase your abilities in adversity.

7. Keep Looking for who is Hiring.

The advice is keep on looking, keep on responding and don't let the news get you down. Sooner or later, companies will rehire laid off employees and others will add staff. If you aren't in the pipeline, you have no chance of landing the role when they open up.

Let's not forget also that there are many companies who are operating (and hiring) as usual because they are part of daily essentials.

8. Dive into Job Search with a Strategy

Now that you know to get down to business, you also need to know that just sending off applications isn't the right way to approach a post-layoff job search. The No. 1 career mistake people make after being laid off is that they dive right back in with no strategy.

So how can you avoid an unsuccessful job search?

Remember don't just find jobs laterally, but also try to find jobs that will appeal to both your strengths and your desires. Instead of approaching your next opportunity from a place of fear, you get to take inspired action and be strategic. What did you love about your last job? What did you wish could be better? What is most important to you moving forward? Is it upward mobility? Developing new skill sets? An opportunity to be mentored? Use these questions to guide you as you apply and interview... Whether you take a few months or a few weeks, it's important to reflect and evaluate, have a clear plan and strategy before diving back in.