

Laid Off? Five Tips For Getting Back into the Game

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With the worst of the economic decline apparently behind us, those who lost their positions to layoffs in 2008 and 2009 are hitting the job market with renewed force. If you're one of them, here's some things to consider.

Organize Your Story of Time Away - and Sell It

Career coach and author Roy Cohen told his clients to build themselves up and become more personally fulfilled after leaving their work. Now he instructs them to be proud of their achievements and talk about them constructively in interviews.

One of his clients, a former investment banker hoping to land in a new position, was "really angry" early on, he says. "She had to do productive things like exercise training, cooking classes and travel to help address the anger and restore her self esteem." Just be sure you break it all down into a brief timeline that's easy to articulate, truthful and simple for employers to grasp.

Grab a Job Search Buddy

Rejection is a part of any job search, so it can help to have someone to share your frustrations with. In order to prevent your slowing down by becoming disillusioned, join forces with another job seeker who's searching at a similar level and is equally committed to the pursuit. One good way to locate contacts like this is through a group like the [Five O'clock Club](#).

Don't Spurn Firms That Have Downsized

Layoffs can be misleading, says recruiter Sandy Gross, founder of Pinetum Partners in Greenwich, Conn. "Disruption at a firm can actually create opportunities for somebody else by downsizing one group or a particular function," she says. "If you're not a legacy employee and living in that hardship, you may not feel that negativity." Research the firm, go in with an open mind, and you could be surprised.

Don't Jump Impulsively

Those who work on Wall Street are used to "short term fixes," says Cohen. If they're not tied to a particular organization they may feel lost. "Sometimes when (applicants) are feeling emotionally needy they'll try and justify taking whatever job is presented," he observes. His advice: Don't. If the project or program you're hired for is ultimately terminated, it could be difficult to explain to another employer down the road.

Quit Barking Up the Wrong Tree

With so many people downsized over the last couple of years, Cohen and Gross have seen applicants willing to bend over backwards just to get working again. Keep in mind that it's counterproductive to spend too much time beating down one particular door.

Cohen sees many job seekers trying for something they're just not suited for. You can learn about the culture of a company by talking to the brokers that support that firm or to those handling trades. If the culture or the job isn't really right for you, rethink things. Opportunities may exist in consulting or working as a contractor until a better opportunity arises. "Give yourself a deadline," says Cohen. Then try something new.