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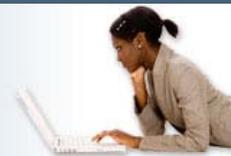
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# Careers



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## Job Searching In A Recession

### Tips on how to land your dream job in an economic downturn

by Beverly Y. Langford

September 22, 2008

**G**as prices are soaring. Mortgages are melting.

Banks are bailing. In case you haven't noticed, we're facing some serious economic turmoil. But that doesn't mean that you can't find your ideal job during tough times. Here are some suggestions for finding a great position even in the face of adversity.

#### Do some self-evaluation to be clear and confident about what you want.

What is the ideal work situation for you, based on your goals and your passion? Perhaps you want an innovative company that seems to have an unlimited future. On the other hand, a more traditional organization may be your cup of tea. Rather than thinking about the job title that you want, consider how you can make a particular contribution to an industry or a company, and get your pitch ready for your interviewers. Identify your core strengths that are transferable, and evaluate where the gaps are in your own abilities.

*Market Wire* suggests that you be realistic about compensation packages. The go-go days of the late nineties are history. Check the salary ranges for the job you are seeking, and hold out for what you are worth, but don't price yourself out of the market. Also, let the potential employer introduce the topic of money and benefits.

Be prepared to discuss long-range goals. Most executives are interested in ambition and drive. Are you willing to re-locate? How do you feel about working long hours? Don't let these questions blindside you. Be prepared, and deliver your honest answer with confidence.



#### Understand the importance of first impressions.

When the competition is fierce, you need make the very best impression. Look sharp. Wear clothes that fit and flatter. Make sure that your grooming is impeccable. Lean toward the traditional when deciding what to wear.

Credibility comes from more than just being good at what you do or even having a good command of language. It comes from the overall package you present, a package that includes what you're wearing. According to image and fashion expert Robert Pante, author of *Dressing to Win*, "You always make some kind of statement, powerful or inept, with the way you dress."

#### Know that planning and organization are critical.

Part of that making a great first impression often involves being the best-prepared candidate. Start with your resume. Make sure that it highlights your accomplishments, and tie those accomplishments to business results. Fill your resume with active verbs and keyword nouns. Because many companies don't need to advertise for openings, send your resume by email to targeted companies as well as posting it to career websites. If practical, seek professional help in writing your resume.

#### Check these out...

[Master Networking In 8 Steps](#)

[5 Minutes With Marylouise Fitzgibbon](#)

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[Career Women: Their Own Worst Enemies?](#)

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Today's job searchers need to be extremely well organized, and fortunately, we have the tools to accomplish that purpose. Research those industries that interest you, and keep a record of contacts. Corporate websites are great sources of information.

Stay on people's radar screens so that you don't get lost in the shuffle of many candidates. Remember that many companies are in a pause mode. Make sure that you stay in touch with your main targets so that you are a natural choice when they start hiring again. Use emails, notes, and phone calls to remind interviewers that you are available and interested. If you don't want to intrude into someone's day, leave voice mails or send emails at a time you know that the person won't be in the office.

**Develop yourself by learning new skills.**

People don't have the luxury of getting to know each other as in years past, so credentials and certifications are more important than ever. Are you up to speed on the latest technology that applies to your field? If you can swing it financially, consider attaining certifications in appropriate areas. Also, think about your communication abilities. If necessary, take a course in advanced presentation techniques, negotiation, or business writing. If you can't attend a course, make time to increase your reading. How-to books are everywhere, and many are excellent.

**Ramp up your networking.**

Mixers are great, but consider professional associations within your field. Attend career fairs that seem to fit your goals. Get comfortable taking the initiative to introduce yourself to strangers and carry on substantial conversations.

Make sure that your friends, family, and acquaintances know that you are looking for a job. Brainstorm with them about connections they may have in the companies you have targeted. Ask people who know you to write a reference letter so that you will be prepared even before someone asks.

Additionally, use your social networking site to broadcast the fact that you are conducting a job search. And, speaking of social networking, know that hiring companies check them. Make sure that yours is presentable in every way and positions you in the best light.

Career coach Julie Jansen suggests that you network broadly and deeply, and be ready to give before you receive by providing an idea, an introduction, or some assistance to the other person.

Even though times are challenging, the skills that you develop through savvy job searching will pay dividends and enhance your performance once you get that dream job.

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