

Effective Job Search Strategies in a Recession –Tip 6

You may be wondering why job search techniques should be any different during a recession than they are at any other time. Isn't it different only because there are fewer jobs and more people looking? That is a major part of the problem and all the more reason why you need to know how to stand out from all the others during your job search. Let's look at the two major problems and the ways you can overcome them and stand out from others:

The problem – Too many people chasing too few jobs

If you are at an executive or mid-career manager level, you already know that the pool of jobs at your level is limited. How many VP of Sales or CFO positions does a company need? When you know you are competing with many others in your industry, the logical conclusion is to cast your net broadly and look for jobs outside of your industry experience. You hear about or see a job and say to yourself, "I can do that" and you busily recast your resume to make it less specific to your industry or you "dumb it down" so you could be considered for lower-level positions.

Logical thinking but the wrong conclusion. When you cast your net too broadly, so do many others who also think they can do that job. What happens is that the company that wants someone with most or all of their experience in their industry is suddenly inundated with many more resumes than they can effectively process. The result is that they become more specific about what they want and more focused on finding candidates only from within their industry.

The solution

Prepare your resume and craft your message so that you focus on positions that use the skills you are best at and want to use. Focus on your top three skills because if you include more, you begin to dilute them in the eyes of the reader. Prepare achievement stories that demonstrate the top three skills. Use those stories in your resume to demonstrate your top skills and tell them to others during your job search. People will remember the stories more than they will your list of skills.

If you need to make an industry change, identify your target industry and use your network to find and talk to people in those industries. Work your way through your industry contacts to find someone who is holding the job you want or who has made a similar industry transition. Seek out their help to find out how they made their transition and what they consider to be your transferable skills. You may think you already know that but you need those who are in your targeted industry to give you the words you need to use that would be understood and accepted by those in a different industry.

When you've talked to several people, you now have a network of contacts in that industry that can help refer you to opportunities in their industry. While you will still be competing

with many other people, you now have a referral within the industry who can vouch for the effective transferability of your skills and industry experience. They can also serve as examples of how they successfully made the transition to that industry.

The problem – You don't know anyone in the industry you want to target

You have most of your experience in your industry and don't have a large network that you can tap into for referrals. Besides, you aren't comfortable networking, collecting business cards, and trying to tell others that you are in "transition" and looking for a new job.

The solution

While networking as described above is how you network for business, it is not how you network for employment. Networking for employment is more akin to how you make social connections. To help you develop an effective network that will want to help you, remember and use the acronym **IOU**:

- I** – I is for initiating a relationship. Get to know them. Building relationships takes time.
- O** – O is for meeting them to obtain their help, support, advice, their perspective after their transition. Take them into your confidence and you'll earn their respect.
- U** – U is when you use the information, support, or advice to help you make better decisions, to get referrals to others, and especially to those who would consider you for employment.

IOU is a reminder that when you are successful at finding your new job, you owe your contacts a big thank you for their help, support and referrals. If you take your time and don't jump ahead to the O or the U too soon, you will develop relationships that will want to help you.

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