

How to Find a Job When You Think There Are No Jobs – Tip 9

Government statistics just released for December 2009 show that unemployment remained at approximately 15.3 million (10% of the labor force) dropping only slightly from November. Included in the unemployment numbers are approximately 1 million who have given up and are not actively looking for work because they don't think there are jobs available for them.

When you hear this, you might think why you should even bother looking if you think no one is hiring. Think again because it might surprise you to learn that in the month of November 2009 3.9 million people found new jobs and employers had 2.1 million jobs they were trying to fill. That totals 6 million jobs! Large numbers of people are finding work, even at companies that are reducing headcount.

Now is not the time to despair. It is time to rethink your career options. If the industry where you have worked has moved overseas or shrunk dramatically and if you don't think jobs in that industry will return any time soon, now could be the ideal time to reevaluate your career by re-examining your skills and work preferences and redirecting your search. Here are my four R's:

1. Refine your search
2. Reassess your capabilities
3. Realign your job search
4. Redefine employment for you

1. Refine your search

If you believe you have chosen the right career path and believe the job you want is there but you just haven't been successful, look carefully at your approach. Practice clearly and succinctly to describe the position and industry where you want to work. If you approach your job search and interviews as if you just want a job, you won't find any job. When you can describe the specific job you want and can explain your skills, experiences, successes, and passion for the job, you will significantly increase your attractiveness in the minds of potential employers. Employers want to employ someone who can do what they want, so don't emphasize what you can do for them if it is not what they want. It will only be a distraction.

2. Reassess your capabilities

If you feel burned out from your last job or you realize that the job you had will not return to where you want to work, now is the time to reassess what skills you have that you want to use most. Review your work experience noting when you were happiest or had the most work satisfaction. What was it you were doing? Which skills energized you the most and which ones were you not good at or would prefer not to use or emphasize? Write down your

ideal job, listing what you want to do and with whom you would want to do it. Describe how having someone with those skills could benefit a company and then re-start your job search to find employers who want or need someone to do what you want to do. Change how you think of yourself from a job seeker to being a resource to an employer.

3. Realign your job search

If you find that your search for a job similar to the one you had in the same industry is not proving successful, consider what other industries or employer settings (commercial, government, not-for-profit, etc.) could use or benefit from the same skills and experience. Since employers typically prefer candidates with experience in their industry, you will need to translate your skills and experience into terms that employers in the new industry would understand. Rather than sending your resume directly to companies, you will enhance your acceptance by using your network to identify someone who can refer you to an employer and make some positive statement about you personally and professionally.

4. Redefine employment for you

If you are having difficulty finding a full-time, permanent position, think objectively and ask yourself why. If you've been told or you think the problem might be that you're overqualified, too old, made more in your last job than what's being offered, or have changed jobs "too often", you may need to explore other employment options. Consider pursuing self-employment, offering your services to multiple employers on short-term or project-based assignments where you could be a subject matter expert delivering quick solutions or offering limited support during times that employers need assistance. Consider teaching or training others in a classroom setting or working one-on-one with less experienced employees helping them to be more productive. You could do this by working independently on your own, or with a college or company that offers those services to employees through their employers.

When the job market is tough and employment prospects look dismal, you must get out of the box you've been in and think creatively about what you can do that will energize you and provide personal and financial satisfaction that demonstrates that you are a resource that others need and are in charge of your career.

Carl Wellenstein is an employment and career strategist located in Southern California and is the author of [12 Steps to a New Career](#). He helps those in mid-career facilitate career advancement, expedite job changes, and pursue new career destinies.