

## **9 STEPS TO TAKE RIGHT NOW IF YOU'VE BEEN LAID OFF**

**At this moment, your job prospects may seem bleak, but you can still take purposeful steps toward your next role.**

*By Joseph Liu* 6 minute Read

A few weeks ago, everything may have felt stable in your career. Now, with the coronavirus outbreak continuing to have a tremendous human and economic impact, you've suddenly been given the unfortunate news: You're getting laid off.

Suddenly, you're left asking yourself, "Now what?"

If dealing with a global pandemic isn't enough, how do you bounce back from a career setback at a time when the entire world has come to a screeching halt, with [entire industries facing destruction](#) and other [companies freezing hiring?](#)

While your job prospects at this moment may seem bleak, you can still take steps to improve your chances of landing your next role.

### **Solidify relationships**

In the midst of a crisis, the connections we have with others often make all the difference. Now is the ideal time to set up meetings with colleagues to ensure you're reinforcing the professional bonds you've built.

These days, that means hopping onto a one-on-one video chat instead of grabbing lunch. But you should use your remaining time still employed to explain your situation, share your plans, and explore ways you and your connection can help one another, now or in the future.

### **Reduce spending**

Given the uncertain circumstances we're in with COVID-19, landing your next role may take even longer than usual. You need to buy yourself as much time as possible. Reduce or eliminate any discretionary spending you can. This means cancelling extra spends like subscription and streaming services. Cut expenses related to activities that are prohibited or restricted due to social distancing measures—pause your gym membership, cancel expensive holidays, and avoid ordering out too frequently.

By bringing down your expenses, you not only alleviate financial pressure, but also allow yourself to job search with less desperation and more confidence.

### **Accept what's happened, and move on**

Although you may be frustrated, or even angry at how this layoff occurred as a result of something completely outside your control, accepting you've been laid off will help you pivot as quickly as possible. Instead of ruminating too much about *could haves* and *should haves*, create an action plan for yourself.

Build a job search to-do list that could include updating your résumé, writing a cover letter template, asking for recommendations for your LinkedIn profile, polishing up your social media profiles, reaching out to industry contacts, and practicing interview responses. Use these guidelines to increase your chances at landing that next job.

## **Capture your most recent accomplishments**

Make sure you're taking stock of all your key accomplishments as you move on from your current role. Record all your significant accomplishments in a document somewhere, so you can eventually transpose them as bullet points onto your résumé. Ensure your résumé is updated and ready to send when opportunities arise.

Moreover, now is also a good time to ask your former manager for a recommendation, which you can feature on your LinkedIn.

## **Rebuild your personal brand**

In the middle of a professional setback, not to mention a global pandemic, your response will say a lot about you. While a layoff can understandably feel like a blow to your career narrative, facing adversity and setbacks are an opportunity to redefine your personal brand.

What actions will you proactively take to bounce back? What contributions will you make to others in need? Use this as a time to reinforce qualities like persistence, proactivity, and positivity that may be attractive to your future employer. For example, come up with creative ways to reach out to prospective employers. Self-publish articles on LinkedIn or Medium that convey your key skills and interests. Avoid speaking negatively about your former employer, and concentrate on your strengths.

## **Refresh your elevator pitch**

When explaining a layoff, people too often come across as defensive, bitter, or insecure. The best way to avoid this is to get comfortable with the fact that getting laid off is not a result of your actions. Take this time to remind yourself of your key accomplishments, skills, and the strengths you intend to bring to your next role.

From there, script out exactly what you'll say when people ask what happened, so you can speak candidly about it and come across as focused on the future over the past. Make sure you have a clear [2-3 minute career narrative](#) ready to go in response to the question, "Tell me about yourself."

Start with a high level overview of the key chapters in your career, followed by a verbal summary of your goals, experiences, accomplishments, and transitions for each of those chapters. Afterwards, finish up by going through the characteristics of the job you're seeking, and why the company and role is a perfect fit.

With this short summary, you can come across as polished and professional when someone inquires about your work history.

## **Share news of your layoff**

While this involves putting your pride to the side, broadly sharing news of your layoff with others can help open the doors, whether that means someone reaching out to talk or offering information on an opportunity.

Be sure to do this only after you've clarified your desired role and refined your elevator pitch, both of which will present you as focused.

With current circumstances, you'll want to do this delicately to avoid seeming self-centered amidst a global pandemic. Keep in mind that any person you reach out to may have been directly affected by COVID-19. Make it crystal clear you're aware of the current outbreak, along with the immense pressures everyone is under. Avoid coming across as entitled or pushy at a time when people are dealing with their own struggles and priorities.

It goes without saying, you should be polite and understanding if people don't have time to respond.

### **Begin virtual networking**

With many cities on lockdown for the time being, you can't exactly attend in-person networking events or invite someone for a coffee. However, you can still network quite effectively. People working from home may be more open to speaking with you because they're yearning for human connection.

Set up informational interviews over web conference platforms like Zoom or Skype. Join the increasing number of online webinars, virtual job fairs, or virtual meetups to establish professional connections with others from your home office.

### **Find a source of fuel**

The world is filled with uncertainty right now. Every single person I know is uncertain about the future of the world, their careers, or someone they love. Bouncing back from a traditional layoff is already stressful. Trying to bounce back from it in the middle of a global pandemic? Even *more* overwhelming.

One way to combat this is to find a source of fuel to help you through this trying period in your career. That may mean ensuring you're staying healthy, taking care of yourself, or finding a source of inspiration through books, podcasts, or career resources to lift you up. When I need inspiration, I typically turn to inspirational TEDx Talks about career transitions, or [I tune into podcasts](#), like *How I Built This*, that remind me how most successful people have had to overcome adversity during their career journeys.

Recognize this period may be one of the most difficult times in your career. Sometimes just realizing something will be an uphill climb is comforting when your life and career is not going as expected. Ground yourself with the awareness this will likely be a marathon, not a sprint, so pace yourself.

By following these recommendations, you won't find immediate success, but with enough effort, you can absolutely pivot to something new despite these challenging times.