



Job-Hunt® 15 Minute Guide

FREE

SECOND EDITION

Layoff Self-Defense

**7 Facts You Need to Know *plus*
7 Steps to Protect You and Your Income**

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Don't Wait – Take Care of Yourself NOW



If others have already been laid off, don't wait for the golden handshake. Take care of yourself NOW. Your loyalty to your employer – helping them survive a tough economy – may not be rewarded, either by your current employer or by future employers.

Your goal should be to find a new job before the old one evaporates. Denial, as they say, is more than a river in Egypt, but do NOT expect that being a competent, or even an outstanding, and loyal employee will protect your job. It may not.

7 Facts You Need to Know:

1. Layoffs are not rational – who stays and who leaves is seldom related to job performance.

Most often, those laid off were in the wrong place (department, division, location, function, or “slot”) at the wrong time (expense-cutting time). Bad luck; not bad performance.

2. After the layoffs begin, the longer you stay, the greater your credibility gap with potential new employers.

The logic is that the employees who stay until “the end” are the poor performers with few other options (or they'd have left sooner).

3. You are *more* interesting to another employer when you have a job. You are *less* interesting when you are unemployed.

Think about two toddlers (or two dogs or two cats) with two toys – don't both usually want the same one? Same with employers! Not rational, but real, nonetheless!

4. Your existing employer will *not* be happy to learn that you are looking for a new job.

If your job search is discovered by your employer, you may be fired. The fear is that you will take customers, important information, and/or key staff members when you leave.

5. 79% of recruiters Google job candidates “always or most of the time,” so you MUST know what they are finding attached to your name.

Job seekers have lost opportunities without knowing because *someone else with the same name* has a very negative public image that potential employers find.

And, of course, people have caused problems by Tweeting how much they hate their boss or by posting risqué or drunken photos on Facebook – *all findable through search engines*.

6. To find a new job, networking is the method that succeeds!

Networking connects 80% of people with their next job. Start expanding your network now, while you have a job! (See Fact # 3.)

7. Many employers track the use of their computers, computer networks, company email systems, voicemail systems, company cell phones, and other assets. Some also monitor employee participation in social media.

Your employer may, or may not, have guidelines/policies about acceptable use. Look for this information and comply.

Even if you don't find the documentation, proceed with caution – particularly with any mention of your employer's name, the names of members of management, products, services, technologies, etc. You won't impress a new employer by trashing your former employer or sharing proprietary information (they are thinking “What might this person say about us some day?”), and you could get into trouble with your current employer.

7 Steps to Take **BEFORE** You Are Laid Off:

1. Leverage LinkedIn, *immediately*.

LinkedIn is particularly important now because it is very popular with recruiters! They search the members to find good job candidates.

- Don't blow your cover with your employer by being obvious in your job search. Raise your visibility purposefully and briskly, but *not* overnight. (See Fact # 4 for the reason to be careful.)

Caution: Look for your employer's "Guidelines for Acceptable Use of Social Media" or "Social Media Policy" or something similar. (See Fact # 7.)

- Make sure that your Profile is 100% complete (LinkedIn will tell you). That includes a photo (use a head shot, done by a professional, if possible) plus 3 recommendations.
- Use your LinkedIn account activity to support your current employer and job. Update your "status" at least once a week (related to your current job), and be sure that your status updates are public so that other LinkedIn members can see them. (See Fact # 7.)
- Use LinkedIn's many functions (Groups, Answers, etc.) to build your personal credibility and visibility, *very carefully*.

Join LinkedIn Groups related to your employer (if there are any) and your employer's industry, and participate professionally.

Post thoughtful questions and provide coherent and relevant answers in LinkedIn's Q & A section, called "Answers."

Do NOT select "Career opportunities" or "Job inquiries" in your Profile's "Contact Settings." Recruiters will still contact you if you are appropriate and findable (Groups, Answers, etc.), and your job search will be less obvious to your employer.

2. Establish non-work contact channels.

You don't look very savvy if you hand out your current business cards with your employer's name on them. And very awkward situations may result when someone calls to talk about a job opportunity while a coworker is standing nearby, or leaves a message with a co-worker about an opportunity. Your employer's voicemail may be monitored, as well.

- Set up a Yahoo, MSN/Hotmail, or Gmail account for "private" communications.
- Purchase your own personal cell phone, if you don't already have one. If you get one of the "smart" phones, you can also handle your personal email account, as long as it's not using your employer's network. **DO NOT USE** an employer-supplied cell phone for your job search!
- Print or purchase personal business cards with your "private" contact information on them. Include **NO** references to your current employer, except (perhaps) your current job title. It is not necessary to include your home address – use generic regional descriptions like "Boston, MA area." That lets potential employers know where you live without disclosing your home address.

Remember that protecting your privacy is not only protecting you from identity theft, it's also protecting your family. And, an open job search may get you fired (Fact # 4), so it's protecting your income stream as well.
- Hand out your personal business cards at networking events and use your personal email account as contact information on your resume.

3. Increase your external face-to-face networking.

You've heard it a thousand times because it is true – networking is how jobs are filled. (See Fact # 6.) The "most qualified" candidate is hired only if they were known or recommended by a trusted person. Networking works because people prefer to hire people who are "pre-screened" through a trusted network, even if they are *not* the "best qualified" candidates available.

- Check in with your college, grad school, and even high school career center to see what services they offer.

Often free or low cost assistance includes career counseling and resume help. It usually includes an alumni/ae directory and help networking with other alums.

Don't limit yourself to the schools you graduated from – consider the schools you attended for one semester or more.

- Track down old colleagues using Google, LinkedIn, ZoomInfo, Ziggs, etc.
Job-Hunt.org has a very large directory of corporate and military “alumni groups” at http://www.job-hunt.org/employer_alumni_networking.shtml. These groups offer connections to other former (and, in some groups, also current) employees. If your former employer doesn't have one, start a LinkedIn Group or a Yahoo Group – and then tell Job-Hunt.org about it.
- Attend appropriate professional or business organization meetings and events, including college reunions.

If anyone asks why you're getting more active, suggest that you want to stay up to date in your field and that it's good for business (your employer's business).

If you haven't attended for a while, volunteer to help at the check-in desk or to hand out name tags (great job to meet the other members) or join the program committee or whatever you can do (well!) that will give you a good excuse to speak with people you don't know (or don't know well), particularly if you are shy.

4. Do NOT job search from the office, including resume updates, email, and networking!

As stated in Fact # 7, employers can, and many *do*, monitor the online activities of employees for security of confidential information and to ensure that people aren't wasting work time shopping or doing other things online that are not job related. So, they see the employees who spend a lot of time on Monster or Indeed or Craigslist, etc. (See Fact # 4 for their reaction.)

- Use your new contact information (See Step # 2.) on that new resume. Don't include your current employer's contact information – use your personal and private email address and personal cell phone number.
- Watch for email messages commending you on doing a good job. Forward them to your personal email account and print them, and take them home to save. If a boss or co-worker leaves the employer, ask them for their personal contact information so that you can stay in touch – to collect (or exchange) written recommendations and job leads, “just in case.”
- Your employer may monitor your use of the Internet (visiting job boards, etc.), editing your resume on “company time” using a “company asset,” using the company cellphone or BlackBerry for your job search. And they may have tracking installed so that they know! Remember Fact # 4 – employers don't like (or trust) job seekers on staff.

5. Expand your online presence – in a focused, professional, and managed way.

- Google “your name” to see what is shown by Google. Try to find a unique version of your name to use for your online identity.
- Set up a Twitter, ZoomInfo, and other online profile appropriate for you.
Check to see if others working for the same employer have also set up public profiles. Search on your employer's and/or co-worker's names. If other employees have public profiles, particularly those more senior to you, you're probably safe with a public profile yourself.
- Publish your non-work contact information so that recruiters, and others, can reach you if they have an opportunity for you.
- Register your name as a domain name, including your maiden name if you are a woman using a married name, or add your middle initial, for example, yourname.com. (less than \$10/year at GoDaddy.com).

This is a good thing to own, whether or not you use it immediately. And, in the future, this will be the basis of your “personal brand” for other 21st century job hunting.

6. Focus on what you want your next job to be and who your preferred employers are.

Consider what you might want to do “next,” and where you might want to work. Then, make a plan to get there, and start implementing it.

- What are you interested in? What do you enjoy doing?
Take “interest” tests, read books like *What Color Is Your Parachute* by Richard N. Bolles, and see if you can get help from your college, grad school, etc.

- Do you need more experience in a specific area?
If you can, volunteer for a task that will give you that experience while working for your current employer.

If you can't get that experience with your current employer, see if you can get it volunteering for a charity you support, with a relevant professional organization, or with a political candidate or cause.

- Do you have an educational gap that you need to fill for that new job?
Take a class to fill, or to start filling, that gap. Thousands of schools offer countless courses that you can take online from home (and be prepared to pay for it yourself so you won't have any explaining to do in the beginning or reimbursement to do later).

Add the new classes to your resume when appropriate.

- Any companies you would like to target as potential employers?
Research potential employers! *You don't want to be the last person hired before the layoffs begin at the new employer*, so check out the Website, Google the company and look past the first page of Google search results because savvy companies “bury” their “digital dirt” below a substantial amount of positive information on the search engine results pages.

Start working on your network to reach into those employers' organizations. This is where that college alumni network, LinkedIn, et al. can be very helpful.

7. Cut back your spending.

Save money in case you are laid off before you find that next job so you can keep paying your mortgage or rent, your utility bills, and buy groceries and gasoline.

- If you have a mortgage, see if you can refinance to get a lower interest rate and a lower monthly payment.
- If you own a home outright or have a mortgage and don't have a home equity line of credit, see about getting one, but don't use it until you have no other options to pay your bills.
- Check with your credit card companies, and ask if you qualify for a lower interest rate, particularly if you can't pay off the balances in full every month.

For More Help...

Visit Job-Hunt.org where you will find:

- Tips for conducting a “[stealth job search](#)” plus information about [predicting, preparing for, and surviving a layoff](#) and [online reputation monitoring and management](#).
- Advice and resources for your [job search networking](#), leveraging the [online social networks](#), establishing your online [personal “brand” and identity](#), [job search for veterans](#), working with recruiters, and [much more](#).
- Over 16,000 individual links (the current exact number is at the top of the home page) to the [Employer Directory](#) which links to the recruiting pages for thousands of potential employers by state and industry, [Directory of Local Networking & Job Search Support Groups](#), [Corporate \(and military\) Alumni Group Directory](#), [Directory of Professional Associations](#), and many other resources useful for job seekers.

In addition to all the links, Job-Hunt also provides many excellent articles from gurus (the [Job-Hunt Experts](#)) in different aspects of job search.

More useful links are added to [Job-Hunt](#) every month.

About this e-book

This e-book is provided to help job seekers deal with the problems of preparing for a layoff. Individual job seekers are welcome to share this book with their friends and colleagues. **It may not be used for commercial benefit nor modified by anyone without written permission.**

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Susan P. Joyce has been editor of Job-Hunt.org since 1998 when her company, NETability, Inc. purchased Job-Hunt.org. Susan has over 30 years of experience in the IT world plus several years of experience working in the Personnel Office at Harvard University and one year as a project manager for salary/compensation survey consulting company.

Susan has been “laid off” twice – the first time by the U.S. Marine Corps at the end of the Vietnam War and the second time in 1994 when her employer, Digital Equipment Corporation, started the massive layoffs that ended with the company (for several years # 2 in the computer industry) disappearing.



About Job-Hunt.org

Job-Hunt.org is a free “employment portal” Website which links to over 16,000 employer recruiting pages, associations, networking, and other job search resources. Advice from 40 over job search experts is also provided, from protecting your privacy to using Craigslist, LinkedIn, and Twitter in your job search.

Helping job seekers since 1995, Job-Hunt has won much recognition for the quality of the content, and our goal is to continue to deserve that recognition, including:

- *US News & World Report* Top Site for Finding Work
- *Forbes* Best of the Web for Job Hunting
- *PC Magazine* Best of the Internet for Careers
- AOL Jobs Hot Site of the Week

Job-Hunt.org has been mentioned or quoted in TIME, FORTUNE, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Chicago Sun-Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe, Newsday, The Worcester Telegram, and *many* other books, magazines, newspapers, and Websites.