

By CHERYL SIMPSON

USE these strategies, questions, and suggestions to make the most of your transition.

Recovery Plan:

This is probably not something you wanted to happen and, even if you did, it's certainly not a happy thing to experience. Whatever you're feeling, it's important to craft a game plan to help you move forward proactively.

Gather your work-related resources. As quickly as you can, pull together any files or resources from work that it is appropriate for you to take with you, such as performance evaluations, testimonials, contact information for colleagues, and reference materials you can use to update your resume and LinkedIn profile.

1) Get your finances organised

See your financial planner right away (or get one) and take a look at your resources. How long can you afford to be unemployed? How much money do you need to make in your next role? How much money can you afford to invest in your upcoming job search?

2) Review your time table

While most folks want to land a new job right away, others plan to use their transition as a mini-sabbatical. What works for you? Do you have any vacations planned in the coming months? By what data must you land your new job? How much time can you invest in the search and when you plan to begin?

3) Process your feelings

Give yourself some time to decompress from the layoff or termination event – a weekend to a week is help-

Strategies to face a termination or layoff

ful for most people. Don't think too much about your search during this stage as this is not the right time to make major decisions. Rather, allow yourself an opportunity to grieve and talk things over with those who are important to you.

4) Dream forward

While this isn't the right time to make major decisions, it is a great time to dream. A "forced" transition such as a termination or layoff can be a gift in disguise. How can you make it so for you? Is this the right time to pursue that degree or certification you've been wanting? Or would you prefer to invest in more time for your family, hobbies, or self?

Search Strategy:

Once you've begun to recover from the fact of your layoff or termination, it's time to begin planning your search strategy.

Hone in on your personal brand

How do you wish to be seen by prospective employers? What are you known for? What do you do better in your work than your peers? What bottom- or top-line results have you been able to achieve and how do you do so? What return-on-investment does your employment offer your next employer?

Define your next role

What specific titles do you plan to pursue? Even if titles aren't important to you, this question should be since it provides focus and key words for your career communications tools. Which level of position is a great next step for you?

Pinpoint your preferred companies and industries

What type of companies do you wish to join next? Of what size? Which specific companies would be great matches for you? What about industries – which ones do you plan to prioritise?

Determine your geographic preferences

What specific cities, regions, and countries will you target? Rank order them so you know what order it will make sense to pursue them.

Decide which search methodologies you will use

There are five primary search methods you can use in a job search (networking, company targeting, LinkedIn, recruiters, and job boards) – which 2-3 are best suited to your search, the amount of time you have available to search, and your career targets?

Plan how you will execute your search methodologies

Devise a plan for each method so you know exactly what you should be doing during each week of your search. A job search is essentially a full-time job, and like a full-time job it requires effective planning to know how to use your time wisely and achieve your goals.

Career Communications Tools:

With your search strategy well-defined, it's time to build out your career communications portfolio.

Resume

There's no substitute for an outstanding resume that showcases your brand and achievements and highlights the relevant facets of your career story. Don't forget to protect yourself from deliberate or inadvertent ageism by limiting your resume's focus to the last 10-15 years.

LinkedIn profile

For the same reasons, you'll need an exceptional LinkedIn profile, especially considering that 96% of recruiters use this social networking site as their #1 candidate-sourcing tool. Ageism is a factor here, too, since your profile can eliminate you from recruiter searches if the database presumes you have more experience than the amount targeted. Eliminate your older jobs from your profile or embed them without dates in the last position listed.

Letters

There are numerous kinds of letters you may need in your search, from job board and networking letters to recruiter, company, and spot opportunity letters. Which do you need based on the search strategy you have crafted?

Networking tools

A resume is no longer an effective networking tool, which means that sending yours to your network will not maximise your networking efforts. Instead, you may need a one-page resume, a marketing brief, or a brand bio to help your contacts understand your background more quickly and effectively than a resume can. You'll also need short message tools such as mini bios or personal commercials to optimise your networking.

Achievement validation

There are numerous opportunities to validate your achievements throughout your search, which is where ancillary documents like PowerPoint presentations, case studies, and leadership briefs come in. Which do you need? Which should be attached to your LinkedIn profile?

Support Strategy:

Learning

What kind of support do you need to conduct an effective search and land your next role? Do you need to upgrade your search skills or learn new ones? If so, how do you prefer to learn – via reading, DVDs, videos/audios, or online materials? Or would you prefer to leverage the services of a career, job search, or LinkedIn coach to shorten your learning curve? – www.careerlism.com