



WHAT TO DO AFTER A LAYOFF

Don't feel ashamed – You are not at fault, but have been caught in an industry-wide restructuring. Chances are that most people that you talk to during your job search have been laid off at least once in their career.

Blow off some steam (in a positive manner) – It is natural to feel anger at this time. The key is to not let your anger consume you and to find a sounding board to vent your anger without taking it out on your family and friends. Talk to your former co-workers, start a job club where you can meet regularly to discuss your job search efforts and blow off steam. If you find that your anger or sadness persists for more than a few weeks, you should seek professional counseling to help move on from this stage in your life.

File for unemployment benefits - Immediately file for unemployment and register with JobServices at the Virginia Employment Commission. All employers are required to pay into unemployment insurance and you should take advantage of this valuable benefit.

Assess your financial situation - Make a detailed budget and stick with it. Reduce your spending where you can by eliminating or reducing optional expenditures. Try to estimate how long your savings, unemployment, and severance will allow you to look for a job. Contact your creditors to see if you can arrange lower monthly payments while you are looking for work. If you have a great deal of debt, you may wish to contact Consumer Credit Counseling to work out a payment plan with your creditors.

Do you need a career change - Maybe it is time for a career change? See the One-Stop Center in your area for an assessment to evaluate your current skills and the skills needed for your new career. Use your employer-provided benefits or the services of your local One-Stop to enroll in training.

Make a home office - Set aside a place in your home with all the basic office materials that you have. Use this office to conduct your job search and develop the mindset that finding a job is a job in itself.

Make it a job - Like any job you can take a day off, but treat looking for a job like it is your job—five days a week, eight hours a day.

Leave on good terms - Make it a point to go around to everyone that you knew and give them your contact information and get theirs. Try to keep a happy face and don't be bitter. The "survivors" of a layoff go through quite a bit of stress as well. Former co-workers can be a great source of support and may be able to provide tips for your job search.

Who do I know? - This is the start of the job search. Make a list of who you know and where they are. Get this organized on paper or with software to track correspondence.

Figure out what to say - Put together a few talking points. Make sure to get at least one name from each person on your primary list.

Examples for people you know

- Find out how they are doing, what is new with them.
- Give them the news about the layoff if they don't already know.
- Tell them what you are looking for in a job.
- Ask if their company is hiring and what types of jobs they are filling.
- See if they are free for lunch (if they are, ask them if they could think about who they could refer you to between now and then).
- Do they know which companies are hiring?
- Is there anyone else that they know that you should call?

Examples for people you don't know

- Introduce yourself and say who referred you to them.
- Tell them your employer shut down its local operations and what type of job you are looking for.
- Ask if their company is hiring.
- Do they know which companies are hiring?
- Is there anyone else that you know that I should call?

Target your correspondence - Target your correspondence to a specific person at each company. After a few days, follow up with a phone call or an email to ensure that they received your résumé or application and that they were delivered to the appropriate person.

Practice your interview skills - Career fairs can set you up with several interviews in a short period of time. Go on interviews even if you don't think you would care for the job. You might be surprised when you interview and it will give you valuable experience for the job you really want.

Consider temporary work - After you have exhausted your contacts consider taking temporary work. In the right situation this can even lead to a new job.

Put your extra time to good use - If you don't want to consider temp work then make sure your days are busy. You can learn some new skills or even take courses at a local college.

Save your receipts - Remember that everything you pay for on your job search is tax deductible. Make sure to consult your tax advisor on this.