
A Pratical Guide For The Recently Unemployed

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Introduction

Three years ago, something remarkable happened. A job that I held for a little over seven years came to an end. The remarkable part, however, is the blessing that job ending turned out to be.

When we become unemployed, we are naturally faced with the uncertainty of how long it is going to take us to find that next job, and if we're living paycheck to paycheck, even with a little severance pay and some stored up vacation time pay, it has the potential to be a really nerve-racking experience.

But like I said, something pretty remarkable happened that day. When I walked out the lobby door of the building I had worked in for over seven years straight, I found myself walking to my car with a smile on my face and a sense of relief. Granted, I had planned financially for just this type of eventuality, so my cushion was there, but money aside, even in that first hour of being officially unemployed, I felt a sense of opportunity and freedom.

That is because every time in life a journey ends, a new journey begins, and it is important for us to remember that. No matter how bad an experience, no matter how shocking (or anticipated) an unexpected event can be, if we're still breathing, then there is still a chance to turn a potential crisis into an opportunity. And if we play our cards right, we can turn that unexpected event into something extremely positive.

In my case, this job ending afforded me the opportunity to reflect on the past seven years with ample time to really look into what was positive and what was negative about the experience. The wonderful thing about life's potential challenges is that they provide us with crystal clear insight into the lessons each of us is supposed to learn.

By taking the time necessary to reflect, analyze, and gain an understanding of this remarkable event, I was able to truly know what I wanted my next move to be, and what I needed to do to accomplish it. I was also able to analyze and understand exactly what it was going to take to ensure I re-experienced the positives of this seven-year stint as well as ensure I did not re-experience the negatives. This reflection allowed me to conduct a job search over the next two months that put my career and so many other aspects of my life on an even better trajectory than they already had been.

Introduction

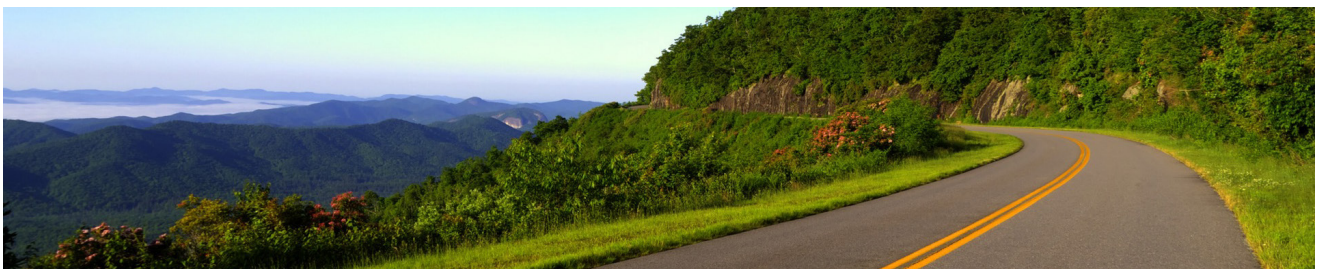
It was during that two-month-long job search while I was officially unemployed for the first time in nearly 14 years – and for the first time that I was not young enough to still be living at home with my parents – I got the idea to put this guide together to try to help anyone else who might be a little unnerved by the experience to get through it not only as unscathed as I did, but to also arrive in the same better spot in which I now find myself.

Let me start off by saying, naturally, my guide is not intended as legal, financial, or official career advice, and definitely should not be the only resource you refer to when becoming unemployed. It is simply intended to share my experience with you and provide the insights that I gained when I was between jobs.

In this guide, I will cover:

- Coming to grips with the fact that you are unemployed
- Accepting that it is OK to feel a little betrayed
- Looking at this turn of events as a fantastic opportunity
- What to do the day you are let go
- How long to take before you start your job search
- What to do when it is time to start searching
- What to do when applying for your new job
- Considering your job search your new full-time job
- Handling interviews and callbacks
- Keeping sane by balancing your job search with some other activities
- Choosing the right offer for you

As you read this guide and hopefully use it as a resource through your transition to your dream job, I hope you remember that when faced with a change, it is important to stay calm, not only look at the positive, but also gain a true understanding of the negative, so you can learn from both, and above all, remember that just because one of life's journeys has come to an end, a far better journey may be just around the corner.



So, You're Unemployed

I know first hand that becoming unemployed can be a very scary experience, but with just a few smart moves, you can get through this and come out better for it on the other side. I know it might not seem like it, but you are looking at a real opportunity – an opportunity to grow, make some valuable new connections, and above all, get a job you really want at the salary you know you could be earning for all of your hard work and dedication.

No matter how it happened, no matter who delivered the message, and no matter the reason they gave you, it is important to remember that the second a job ends, you are the only person who truly knows whether or not this job ending was your doing, or the result of some other factor over which you had no control.

Don't spend too much time reflecting on it – definitely don't brood on it – but take the time to recognize and realize whether or not your new status as unemployed was due to something you did, or didn't do, or if there was nothing you could have done. The true reason may even lie somewhere in between.

I won't spend a lot of time on the scenario in which you were at fault because if you know it was your doing, then you also know what you did incorrectly, what not to do again next time, and all the reasons for which you find yourself in this boat.

But, if you cannot truly look at the job ending as something of your doing, then the most important thing to remember during those first few moments, the first few hours, and in the days and months to come, is that the scenario in which you find yourself is not your fault. There may really be absolutely nothing you could have done to change things – to prevent the scenario in which you find yourself.

But if it's not your fault, then what happened? Think of being let go from your job in the context of a sports team. For years, I have been calling for businesses to stop calling their employees families, but instead, refer to them as a team, which is the most plausible description for any group of employees because a business team experiences the same exact scenarios as a sports team.

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Each year, or season, a sports team has in mind what it needs to accomplish. It has positions that it needs to fill, and it needs the right combination of starters, backup players, support personnel, management, and the right mix of young, powerful players and experienced veterans with years of experience. While a sports team may be in dire need of the skills that a particular player possesses this season, next season those skills may be even more important, or, they may no longer be needed at all.

Some teams have been around forever, and some are new. Some have ridiculously high budgets and some are barely scraping by. Some have full trophy cases and some have painfully empty spots in theirs. Each team needs the right mix of players to accomplish the goal of filling the trophy case and fielding a team that fits within their goals and their budget for the season.

Regardless of the reason you have been told – downsizing, the team or the business going in a different direction, or perhaps even something that you may have done, or even worse, because of office politics or clashing personalities between you and your bosses – it is important to remember that the scenario I have laid out in the two paragraphs above is most likely at the heart of your recent change in employment status.

So, as you begin to move forward with your life and your career, remember these two things: it most likely wasn't your fault, and there probably was not a lot you could have done about it anyway.



It's OK To Feel A Little Betrayed

Having established that there was not a lot you could have done and that you may not bear near the amount of responsibility for your present state of unemployment as you might think, I feel I would be remiss not to address the elephant in the room when it comes to being let go from a job, especially one that you have had for a long while, and especially if you know that you have done your job well and have been loyal to the company and your team – the feeling of having been betrayed.

You showed up every day and you went above and beyond. You identified and stopped problems so well that most people within the company never even knew they existed because you kept them from becoming actual problems. They made it a point to drive home the fact that you did nothing wrong, that the company appreciated your hard work, and that you being let go is in no way a reflection of your ability, or on you as a person.

It is hard at that point not to shout, “Well, then why the hell are you letting me go?!”

When you reflect back upon the experience of being let go over the coming days, weeks, and months, and we both know you will do a lot of reflection, it is important to remember what I stated earlier about viewing the company as a team and knowing that the team just feels it no longer needs your skill set, or no longer holds it in as high of a regard as it once did.

When you were hired, it is most likely that your particular skill set was highly regarded and senior leadership at the company most likely felt that the organization was sorely lacking those skills. But, as time went on, you filled that gap – probably so well that the skill set you provided was no longer seen as being as direly necessary as it was when you were hired. It is almost as if you are a victim of your own success. The business has grown, or maybe even shrunken, and what was once viewed as completely and totally necessary – your skills – are now viewed as being less important to the future of the business. Perhaps, they will simply do away with your position, or spend the money they were spending on you on someone with another set of skills.

That being said, I am not saying that you should not feel a little betrayed, but you should also put yourself in the shoes of your former bosses and former

It's OK To Feel A Little Betrayed

team. They only have so much money to spend and right now, they feel they need to spend that money somewhere else. You most likely make the same types of financial decisions in your personal life – stopping a service, changing vendors, or not going to a particular restaurant any longer. Remember that those decisions can affect others, just how someone else's decision to let you go has affected you.

The best thing you can do instead of dwelling on feeling betrayed or slighted is to accept what happened as something you simply could not change and then move on. Look towards the future and not to the past.

Instead of concentrating on feeling betrayed or tossed aside, look for the opportunity in this turn of events. Use the scenario in which you find yourself to find a better job, working for an even better team and business. Nothing will make you feel less negative about being let go from a job than replacing it with a better one.

And if you are the type of person that cannot simply let that feeling of betrayal go, use those feelings to motivate you in your job search and next career move. Use your feelings to drive you in obtaining a bigger salary, a better title, or whatever it is that will make you feel much better and vindicated.

It is also important to remember that despite what has just happened with your former team, there is definitely a team out there in dire need of your skill set right now. And while your current team may be ready to move on past needing your skills, someone out there is wringing their hands and pulling their hair out, saying that things would be better if they could only find someone with the exact skills that you possess.



Remember To Embrace The Opportunity Given To You

It is a sound that I will always remember - the wheels of my big desk chair as it rolled noisily along the concrete floor of the big, open office space. The sound echoed off of the concrete walls and rows of glass desks. It was funny watching the little heads pop up from their desks and monitors, almost like gophers popping their heads up out of the ground for a look as everyone in the room sought to discover what was making that annoying sound.

It was just me, wheeling my big office chair out of the office for the last time. I'd boxed up the few things I kept at work and all that was left was to wheel my chair, my box, and my printer to the car and drive away for the last time.

In corporate culture, we're supposed to walk out quietly, move on, and then never speak of these final walks out of a place of employment again, even pretend they never happened. We have all experienced them at some point, though, and if I accomplish one thing by continually writing about them, I hope it will be to assure each and every one of you that experiences something like this that the ending of a job truly offers amazing potential when it comes to taking your career and life to the next level.

One such opportunity that is presented to us when a job ends is the chance to expand our personal network. We meet a lot of amazing people at each job, so each time we leave one and start another, we stand the chance of meeting an entirely new set of amazing folks while still being able to stay in contact with the people from the job we have just left. Add in the fact that you will also secure some valuable contacts while conducting your job search, and there's some extra icing on that cake.

So, now that your job has ended, remember to hold your head high and smile, knowing that great things are about to happen for you. The potential to improve so many things you have wanted to improve is the greatest at that point in time. To be cliché, the world is yours to shape and mold as you wish now that you are no longer bound by the job that has just ended. Don't forget to enjoy the feeling of freedom, and then get right to work finding that next opportunity and ensuring it is your best opportunity yet.

As for me, one of the most amazing things about the day I wheeled that big

Remember To Embrace The Opportunity Given To You

office chair out of that echoing, big concrete and glass office and down to my car was the fact that I did not wheel that chair out alone. I was flanked by people who were now not only former co-workers, but life-long acquaintances that will always share the memories of our time there together, and the memory of that funny time William noisily wheeled his big office chair out of the place on his last day.

On your last day at a job, when that window closes, just remember that the biggest door in the world has been opened for you – a door that leads to limitless potential.

And now that we have established that what occurred was most likely not your fault, there was most likely nothing you could have done to change it, and the fact that it is time to stop feeling betrayed and time to concentrate on the future, let's look at some of the ways in which this can be accomplished.



What To Do Right Then And There

While you most likely will be reading this guide days or maybe even weeks after your departure from your former job, I still feel it is necessary to address some key points about the day during which you are actually let go, just in case you happen to actually be reading this guide before you are let go, or right when it happens.

It is important to remember to stay calm and keep your emotions in check. Being let go from a job can definitely be one of the most emotionally taxing experiences of our adult lives. This can be augmented if you are not particularly fond of the person who has made the decision to let you go, or if you truly find yourself completely and totally surprised by what is occurring.

Silence is your friend in this scenario. Feel free to ask any questions you may have, especially about final pay and continuing benefits, but remember that the decision has already been made at this point, and there is nothing you can say or do to change what is happening. And, if you really think about it, why would you want to reverse what is occurring? Why would you want to stay at a place that has obviously decided they no longer need your skills, or worse, no longer appreciates you and your skills?

Whatever time of day, or however you have been told it is time for you to go, embrace the fact that it is time for you to move on. Walk out of there with your head held high, knowing that you did an amazing job and that you will soon find an even more amazing job, team, and company.

Think of all the things that you didn't necessarily like about that job – the things that you wished for, or tried to improve. Know now that you will never have to deal with a lot of those things – and certain people – ever again. Let that put a smile on your face as you walk out the door one last time.

Go out and find a quiet spot to call the people that you need to call to let know what has just occurred. Feel free to vent and to talk it out, but be sure you do it out of earshot from any of your former teammates or the company leadership. No matter what has occurred, don't burn any bridges. Remember that former colleagues and bosses can also be future colleagues and bosses, especially in more tight-knit industries.

What To Do Right Then And There

Once you've made your calls and vented, it's time for you to do a little something for yourself – something just for you. This could be going and having a meal somewhere you wouldn't normally eat, or going some place that has particular meaning to you that you would normally never visit at that time of day because you're usually at work. Go solo, or take someone with you. Chances are, it won't take you long at all to think of the right place to go and whether or not you should go now alone, or wait for a particular someone to go with you. The most important thing is to ensure it is something that you can not only do on this, your first day as unemployed, but also can go and do again on your last day of being unemployed to mark both the beginning and the end of this journey upon which you are about to embark.

When I was at that job for seven years, one of the perks the company offered were excursions as a team to a local bowling alley during the afternoon. While I normally am not one to participate in non-mandatory company outings, I honestly greatly enjoyed those trips to the bowling alley. So, the morning I was let go, after walking out of there with that smile on my face, and calling my wife to let her know what had occurred, the thing that marked the beginning of my journey, and would mark its end, was a trip to that very same bowling alley. It definitely met all of the criteria of the type of outing to mark this occasion. Find your thing to mark the occasion and get out there and do it.

Whether you take your post-let-go outing right then and there, or later in the day, you should really do it that same day no matter what. It will truly mark the day and leave you with something solidly positive for the day, if nothing else.



Take A Couple Days, But Don't Take A Week

No matter how long you've had the job that you just lost, it is important for you to take a couple of days to decompress and reflect. You really need to allow some time for things to calm down and to come into perspective. Unless you have already been looking and have prior commitments to interviews, looking for work in that first few days may actually be a bad idea.

You'll most likely still have a bitter taste in your mouth for a little while and you definitely do not want to waste a perfectly good future opportunity in those first couple of days. Two or three days is usually enough time to decompress, do a few things you have been meaning to do but did not have the time because of having to work every day, and reach the point where you know you are ready to start putting all of your efforts into finding that next opportunity.

Listen to yourself and take note of how you feel. You will know when it is time. But, either way, it is important to not take longer than a week to start your job search. Even if your first efforts are minimal, you don't want to get too far out of your groove or routine.

That being said, there are a few things that you need to ensure you do in those first couple days besides decompress, maybe even during that first day.

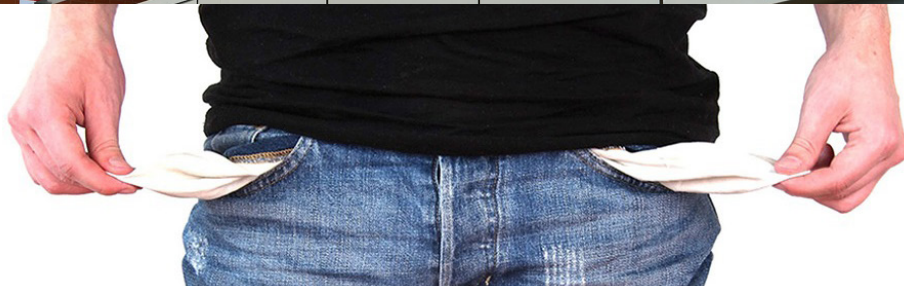
You want to make sure that you have some type of continuing health insurance. Make sure you know the last day that your employer-sponsored healthcare coverage will be provided and make sure that you reach out to a private insurer or COBRA program. You don't want to let your health coverage lapse.

Also, be sure that you have provided any required paperwork back to your former employer in order to wrap up your employment with them. You don't want anything holding up any severance pay, unemployment compensation, etc.

Speaking of unemployment compensation, if you are going to be filing for that compensation, apply as soon as possible. There really is no reason to wait. In some cases, it can be quite some time before you see a dime in unemployment insurance payments. If you've been working, you've been paying for that insurance, so unless you have some type of ethical or other opposition to receiving that money, you should file as early as possible.

Take A Couple Days, But Don't Take A Week

And lastly, you should take a look at your finances and any bills that must be paid in the coming weeks and months. You want to ensure that you have a good grip on your finances now that your paychecks are going to stop for a little while. Take a few minutes in that first few days just to make sure your finances are squared away for the next week while you transition from going to work every day to beginning your job search. Once you actually start your search, you can dig even deeper and make sure your finances are going to be OK for the long haul.



When It's Time To Start Your Job Search

As you might imagine, I have found that the best way to start your job search is to actually take a look at your resume. I know most people usually let their resume become outdated while they are employed, so unless you've kept it up, this task might actually take you a while to complete.

Start by opening and reviewing the most current version of your resume and updating it. You will want to keep this initial version that you are going to use to begin your job search generic and not specific to any particular job posting. You want to have an up-to-date general resume that you can use as the basis for the more specific resumes that you are actually going to submit when you begin responding to job postings.

Be sure that you not only get your resume updated, but that you get a general cover letter and a list of references together. If you work in a field where you will be asked to provide examples of your work during your job search, you'll also want to gather your more general examples together at this time as well.

Be sure that you update your LinkedIn profile and update your resume on any of the job search sites that you use with the more general version you have just updated. Be sure to research online to find the most current resume best practices and to discover the job search sites that will be most worth your while for the type of work you are going to be seeking.

With that being said, it is also important for you to spend some time thinking about the type of jobs you are going to seek, the geographic area in which you will search, as well as the titles and salaries that you are going to be willing to pursue and accept.

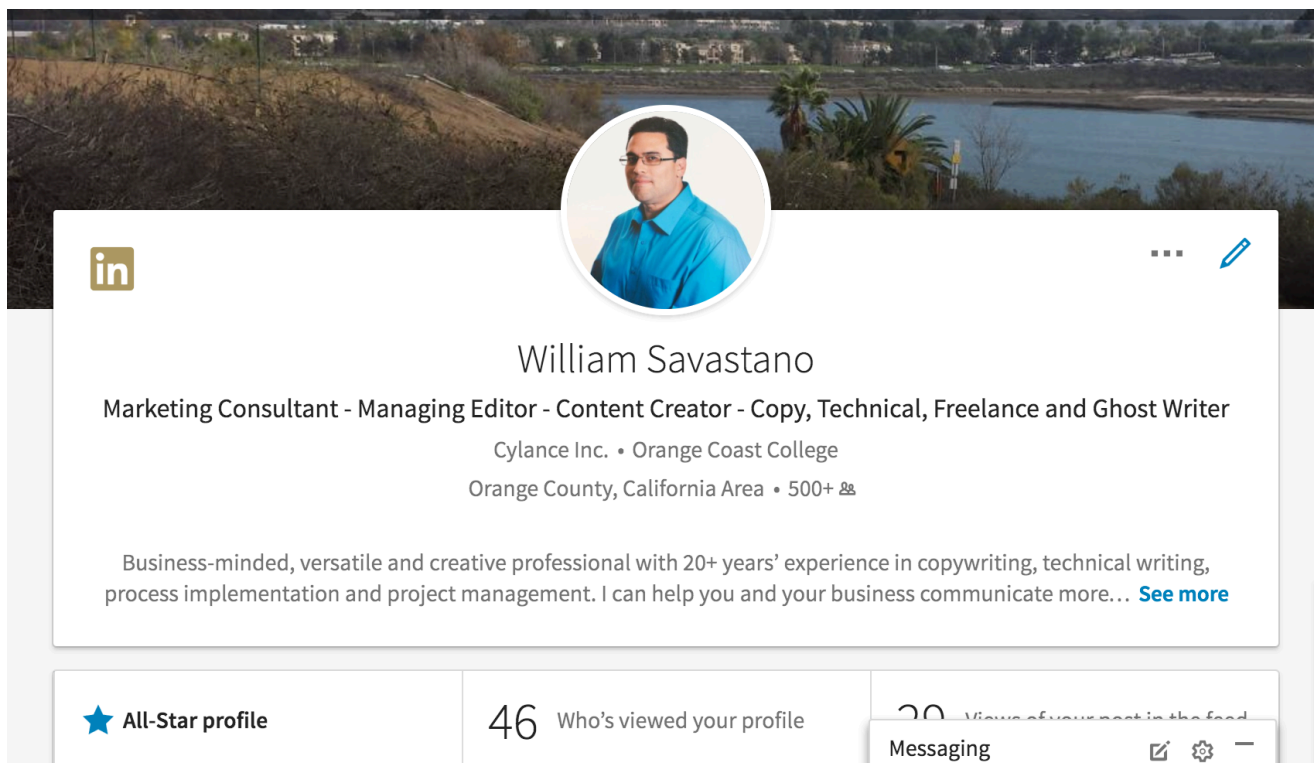
I know you might be anxious to find that next job, but it is very important that you take the time necessary before starting your actual search to get your resume, cover letters, profiles on sites like LinkedIn, and examples of your work together, and make the determination about exactly the types of jobs for which you will be searching.

Also, if you feel you need some help with your resume and profiles, reach out to peers, colleagues, mentors, or others, whom you feel can help you. Feel free to allow others to review your resume, especially those whose opinions you value

When It's Time To Start Your Job Search

and trust.

If it helps, make a list of the types of jobs, types of companies, actual companies, and actual titles of the jobs you are going to seek, and keep it handy to use as a reference during your job search.



When You Are Ready To Submit

Once your general resume, examples, and search criteria are all set and ready to go, and it is time for you to actually begin your search, remember to take particular note of the job sites and particular job postings you feel are yielding the best results and concentrate a little more on those sites and listings.

While you should never be afraid to apply for a position that you feel might be pie-in-sky, you also don't want to waste your time applying for positions that are not relevant or are not even remotely within your skill set. This can be especially challenging as your job search moves past the first few weeks. No matter how bad you want to be a fighter pilot, you should only apply for the job if you actually have the skill set required to be one. Again, don't be afraid to dream, but at the same time, you don't want to waste your or anyone else's time.

I cannot overstress that as you conduct your job search and begin to submit resumes, you will want to gear your resume for each particular job posting. With today's automated job recruiting tools, the only way your resume is going to get through electronic screening is if enough of the keywords and other criteria match the job posting. It may seem over laborious and time-consuming to create a different resume for each job posting that you respond to, but it will actually end up cutting down your job search time immensely in the long run.

You will want to ensure that the keywords from the job posting are in your resume, and also that the points the job posting lists towards the top are also the points that are towards the top of your resume. You don't want to over do it on matching content word for word, but at the same time, you don't want it to seem like you are not willing to put in the effort to get the job by not customizing your resume.

You will also want to be sure to create very specific cover letters for your resumes as well. In addition, as most of today's recruiting teams use extensive online forms, you will want to be sure to take the time to completely and correctly complete these forms. Do not be afraid to set up user accounts on their sites and do not be afraid to apply for more than one job on each site. Again, with everything in the screening process being so automated, your chances greatly improve the more you apply.

Consider Finding A Job Your Full-Time Job

I know considering your job search to be your new full-time job might seem like a pretty daunting task, but what I mean is that you should set aside your time and efforts for your job search, just like you would have done for your work that day. Find a quiet space, make sure that you can concentrate, and dedicate yourself fully to the task at hand. Family, friends, pets, and other distractions can easily creep in, so you need to ensure you have the space and peace necessary to do your work, which just happens to be finding your next job.

This also means that while you should be willing to put in a full day, you want to ensure that you have a regular start and end time to create a routine. You also want to ensure you don't overexert yourself to the point at which it actually harms your job search.

Be sure to take breaks throughout the day and be sure to take a lunch. Break up the day with some physical activity, especially if something like that is unheard of for you while you are actually working at your job.

When you were working, you probably made sure that you made time to network with coworkers and respond to their inquiries in a timely manner. The same should hold true for your job search.

Keep up with your business social media efforts on sites like LinkedIn. If you posted articles, reached out to colleagues regularly, and perused the job postings on LinkedIn before you were looking for work, now is the perfect time to step up your game. Be sure that your LinkedIn profile is up to date, including recommendations and project examples. Be sure to reach out to former colleagues and bosses for additional recommendations. Be sure that you are sharing, or even creating thought leadership items to post to LinkedIn and other professional networking sites.

In addition to LinkedIn, you should consider either starting or upping your game with any trade associations or user groups to which you may belong. You might also want to seriously consider reaching out to recruiting agencies and/or temporary employment agencies. While some may be a complete waste of time, others might actually either help with your job search, or at a minimum, provide you with a legitimate practice arena for job interviews. Interviewing with employment agencies requires the same effort, preparation, and tact, but also

Consider Finding A Job Your Full-Time Job

can be much less stressful and rigorous, providing you with the perfect means to polish your rusty interviewing skills.

Also, you should never allow any inquiry from any potential employer to go unanswered for longer than 24 hours, including over the weekend. You don't want to miss an opportunity because an employer reached out to you on Friday afternoon and you didn't get back to them until Monday morning.

Be sure that you take the time to respond to inquiries properly. Put the same care and effort into your responses that you would an email to your former bosses back when you were very concerned about keeping that job you already had.

And remember, what truly matters is how hard you are working to find your new job when no one else is around. That is when you will see what you are really made of.



Interviews and Callbacks

Inevitably, and hopefully sooner than later, all of those very specific resumes and cover letters are going to lead to some phone and in-person interviews.

When scheduling your phone interviews, it is important to remember that you will need a quiet, undisturbed space. The last thing you want a potential employer to hear is chaos behind you during that interview. I know it seems like this goes without saying, but I am sure there are many recruiters and hiring managers out there who will tell you some amazing stories about what they have heard in the background while conducting phone interviews.

Be sure to have the job description, as well as the resume and cover letter that you submitted for the job posting close at hand. While you should always ensure your resume and cover letter contain nothing but true facts, you want to be sure that the specific resume and cover letter you submitted reflect the answers and content you provide during the phone interview. Be sure to read over all of the materials as close to the interview start time as possible, while ensuring you give yourself ample time to prepare.

Be sure that you research as much as you possibly can about the company and the person or persons who are interviewing you. Know the company's products and services, and check LinkedIn for common contacts, skills, or any other relative information about the company or the interviewers and feel free to bring them up in conversation at appropriate points. Be sure to mention people you know who work at the company or any relevant facts that pertain to the interview.

Also, be prepared for potential interview questions that you think may come up. Be sure you have something to write with and write on so you can take notes during the interview. It will seem more impressive if you can address all of the points the interviewer brings up by going back to your notes. Be prepared for questions about your career and salary goals. You definitely do not want to seem unprepared when these important discussions surface. Take the time to ask the important questions when the interviewers offer you the chance to do so. Remember to ask about things like office hours, travel, health insurance and other benefits, and any other points about the job and company that are of importance to you.

Interviews and Callbacks

For in-person interviews, you want to be sure to dress for the job you want, not the job you have. I know it sounds cliché, but the last thing you want to do is show up to an interview underdressed. You can show up overdressed and be given a pass because it's an interview, but you can't take back showing up in a business casual outfit at a place where formal business attire is the everyday norm.

Be sure to do everything you can to show up 15 minutes before your interview is supposed to start. Be sure to bring hard copies of your resume and cover letter and be sure that you are studied up on the job description, the resume and cover letter you submitted, and everything you can about the company, its products and services, and anyone you can find that will be relevant at the organization. It is better to error on the side of over preparation.

Be sure to not schedule interviews too close together. You don't want to rush yourself and come across as being either uninterested, or worse, like you need to get to something more important than the conversation you are having at the time with your potential employer.

Above all, be sure to treat the interview and the interviewer with the respect they both deserve. Don't waste anyone's time, but don't be afraid to take all the time you need to ensure you are getting all of your questions answered and your concerns addressed. You should try to leave the interview with absolutely no unanswered questions.

It is important to accept as many phone and in-person interviews as possible, especially as you and potential employers appear to be getting closer to making a decision. By building momentum through getting your resume out there and conducting as many interviews as possible, it will only be a matter of time before you are starting to field offers. I know it is also cliché, but much like any sales operation, selling yourself into your dream job is a numbers game. The more resumes, the more interviews; the more interviews, the more offers; the more offers, the better choice you will have and the better chance of finding that dream job for that dream salary.



Start A Lengthy Side Project

While you need to ensure that you stay focused on your job hunt and don't let yourself get distracted, I have found that simultaneously taking on a lengthy side project truly helps with your sanity and also helps pass the time in the evening and weekends when you are not actively looking for your new job.

As much as you may want to at times, you cannot spend every waking moment on your job search. You have to take time to relax and recharge, or else your fatigue will show in the resumes you submit, the profiles you complete, or worse, during your phone and in-person interviews. Now that the average job search can take about three months, it is as important as ever to have more going on than just your job search.

Is there something you have been meaning to do, but just did not have the time because you were working? Maybe something around the house – something you told your family you would do? Some archiving or maybe a remodeling project, or pretty much anything that can occupy your time, let you feel accomplished, and probably to your benefit, not something that will stress you out financially to complete?

I conducted two side projects during my two-month job search three years ago that allowed me to pass the time and mark the event. I had a lot of old pictures that I had been meaning to scan and digitize and I got a good chunk of them archived and stored away digitally during that two months. It is important to not let the side project creep into your job search time, but the proper amount of time spent on a side project could really help maintain your sanity, maintain a sense of calm, and above all, help pass time until you start your next job.

The other side project I conducted was to share a new banner image on my Facebook page every weekday morning. I had received an email that contained some great images from World War II that had rarely been seen. Being a history buff, these were of great interest to me. Each morning before I began my job search, I would take one of these images and make it my Facebook banner image and provide a short description of what was going on in the picture for anyone who might come across the picture on Facebook. There were 43 images total and my hope was that by the time I ran out of images, even with posting five per week, I would already have my new job lined up.

Start A Lengthy Side Project

Guess what happened? By the time I was about half way through the images, I started getting some really worthy callbacks and was starting to complete some great phone interviews. By the time I was getting close to running out of images, I was deciding between three job offers. And, as I had predicted, by the time I was posting the last image, I had already accepted an offer and was looking forward to starting my new job.

Luckily, this worked out well for me. I imagine I would not have been devastated had I run out of pictures before I had landed a new job, but you can also see how you have to be careful that a little side project like this does not demotivate you in your job search.

These are just two things that worked for me that I am providing as examples of side projects. Take the time to find something that is a great fit for you and will motivate you no matter what may be happening during your job search.



William L. Savastano
July 3, 2014 · Edited ·

Wreckage Of A Republic P-47, Which Crashed During The D-Day Invasion, Lies On The Battle-Scarred Beach Of Normandy, France. 22 June 1944. (U.S. Air Force)

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Choosing The Right Offer

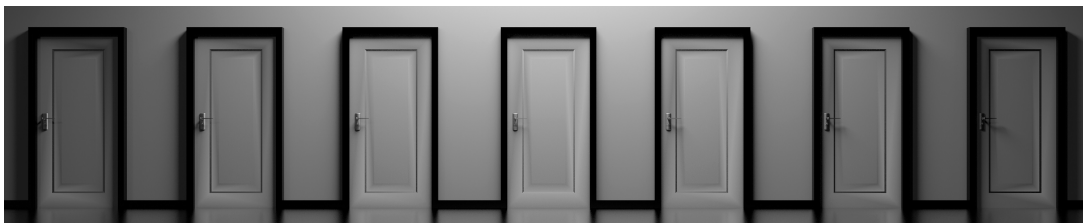
Hopefully once your volume of phone and in-person interviews has really reached that tipping point to finding success, you are going to start receiving some offers. It is important not to let these offers languish because the person and company that is wanting to hire you is probably in dire need of your skills, but it is also important for you to remember to take the time you need to consider every aspect of the pros and cons of the offers you receive.

You don't want to rush in and accept an offer that you will regret later, and you don't want to take so long that the potential employer might withdraw their offer or end up with a different perception of you that ends up ending your relationship. Weigh things like the commute, the salary, the benefits, your new team, the type of work you will be doing, and how rewarding you think that work might be.

I cannot stress enough that you should take the time necessary to reach the best decision possible for your situation. Don't accept a job just so that you are becoming employed as quickly as possible. Consider things like company culture and the people that you have met through the interview process that are going to be your new coworkers.

Do as much research as you can on the companies that have extended offers to you. You want to have the best understanding possible about the financial well being of the companies you are considering. The last thing you want is to accept a job and then regret that you chose that job over one that you did not choose, especially since in a lot of cases, that job will be gone by the time you change your mind.

That being said, if you accept an offer and it turns out to not be the place for you, don't be afraid to get back out there and re-start your job search. Maybe this time around, you can keep your existing job while you conduct your search, and if not, you'll always have this guide and your recent job search experience to fall back on!



Conclusion

Becoming unemployed can be a very scary experience, but how it impacts you is entirely up to you. It's your choice whether to look at this turn of events as a devastating, negative life-event, or the amazing opportunity that it can be. You very easily have the power to change something that can cause stressful uncertainty in your life and turn it into the chance to make your life even better.

Remember that when it happens, it is still not too late to react in a manner that puts you on the right path to turning the loss of your job into the chance to find an even better one. Or better yet, you can prepare for this eventuality ahead of time and end up in an even better spot when you find out it is time for you to move on to a new job.

It is important to remember that in many cases, losing a job can actually be a blessing in disguise, especially if we take the time to decide what we really want in a job and our next career move when it happens. And while I say again that this guide should definitely NOT be your only resource, I put it together to provide you with my experience and hopefully provide you with a starting point for your journey to your dream job at your dream salary.

Now get to work and make it happen!



About

William L. Savastano is a business professional and two time Society for Technical Communication Award Winner with over two decades of experience in the corporate arena. William trained extensively in advertising and marketing copywriting, technical writing, journalism, and both print and electronic publishing. William's body of work includes a large volume of marketing content, collateral materials, websites, operating manuals, technical manuals, as well as inclusion in national publications and a number of published poems and short stories.

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