

Career Advice for Lehman Employees: Staying Sane in a Crazy World

There's nothing quite like reading about your company going bankrupt on the front page of [The Wall Street Journal](#) to break out your resume and dust off your networking skills. For our friends at [Lehman](#), [AIG](#), [Merrill Lynch](#) and others, here's hoping that you manage to hold on to your jobs - and sanity - intact.

But, on the off chance that the thought of looking for a job in the financial services sector might send you running for the nearest cocktail, read on for a few tips on how to stay sane during a job search:

Deal with your issues – then move on.

It's normal to experience a wide range of emotions during a job search, particularly during tough economic times. Whether it's elation (here comes the job offer!) to anger (when the HELL am I going to get a job offer?) to depression (there will never again be a job offer). But no matter how justified your feelings, you aren't doing yourself – or your job search – any favors when you let them get the best of you. This isn't to suggest that you would think of sobbing on the phone to a recruiter, but don't underestimate how even subtle displays of emotions like frustration or anger can shine through during your communications with hiring managers, including emails, phone calls, and, of course, interviews.

The bottom line? If you're talking to people that can hire you, but are still seething just the slightest bit at your last employer or are feeling just a wee bit desperate because of your dwindling bank account, potential recruiters and hiring managers will smell your issues a mile away, and you'll be hurting your chances of landing your next opportunity. Think about it – would *you* want to hire someone in this state of mind? Understandable though your feelings may be, do what you need to do to stay positive when you're in job-search mode.

Quit waiting for the phone to ring.

We've all heard stories about people who landed jobs effortlessly, like the one about the guy who posted his resume online and had multiple offers before the week was through. Or, how about the gal who had a cousin whose boss just happened to have an opening for a new position that she'd be perfect for? How nice for them, but here's the deal: These people aren't you, and they probably haven't lived through the nutty economic times we find ourselves in. This isn't to say that you aren't talented and terrific, or that a job won't land in your lap, but if Lady Luck hasn't smiled on you yet, and you've been looking, then it's time to face the reality that recruiters aren't knocking down your door and roll up your sleeves: It's job search time!

Let me be the one to share the news: Even if you haven't looked for a job in a while, even a really long while, your days of thinking you could land a job without networking, picking up the phone, and doing plenty of follow up, those days are over. This isn't as depressing as it sounds, because the type of skills that are gained during a job search – sales and marketing, the ability to skillfully network, persist in the face of rejection, to name a few – are truly skills for life.

Forget about short and sweet.

Tell the truth: Weren't you just the teensiest bit hopeful that your job search would be short, sweet, and a piece of cake? Can't blame you for that, but let's face facts: Expecting a job search to be easy and over fast is like expecting to become a great skier the first time you hit the slopes. Neither scenario is particularly likely without a serious investment of time and energy by you.

Here's the reality that we hate to hear: The job search probably will take longer than you think, so take that part-time job to earn a little cash, or sign up for that course at your local community college if it's going to provide you with some marketable skills. In other words, don't delay making your own 'job search' investments, and quit holding back if you need to take certain steps in order to improve your job search. After all, if you were convinced that you were going to land a job in only a few weeks, you probably wouldn't sign up for a class, pay money to attend a conference, or even build relationships through networking, even though these might be the very steps you need to take in order to get hired.

The truth is that most things are tough before they become easy and the job search is no different. But, as you get your resume in great shape, practice those interviewing skills again and again and continue to reach out and get the feedback you need in order to improve, your search will get easier. Just like a skier, the more you're willing to put yourself out there and practice, the better you'll get. Best of all, making the investment to take the extra steps can only yield better returns for you, your job search, and your career in the long run.