



## Getting Fired: An Opportunity for Change and Growth

The words that strike fear in all working persons -- fired, terminated, laid off, let go, restructured, dismissed, downsized, rightsized -- mean only one thing: you're back on the job market looking for new employment opportunities.

While you may find losing your job hard to deal with, most career experts say the best thing you can do is get right back into the job market -- even if you've gotten a severance package -- rather than sit around being discouraged. And you shouldn't be discouraged -- look at this firing as a chance to start anew with a better opportunity.

**How do you deal with being fired or downsized in terms of your resume and job-hunting? That's what this article is all about -- getting you in shape to find an even better job than the one you had previously. What follows is the career tune-up checklist.**

- 1. Decide on a career path or change.** If you loved your last position and the industry you worked in, then you can move to the next point. But, if you weren't happy, now is the time to think about a career change. What kind of [transferable skills](#) did you acquire from your previous employment? For example, if you worked in a college admissions office, but now want to get into sales, you have valuable sales and people skills -- transferable skills from one position to another. If you're not sure what you want to do, you should do some self-assessment. You can find some great [career assessment tests](#) on the Web.
- 2. Tune up that resume.** Ideally, you've been keeping your resume current, but if you have not, now is the time to take a hard look at it. Find some great resumes resources here, then:
  - The first thing you need to decide is whether to include the job from which you were terminated on your resume. In most cases, you should include the job -- unless you only worked there a short period of time (less than three months). Show an end date of your previous job. Focus on your accomplishments and achievements.
  - Consider adding -- if you don't already have these sections -- a key accomplishments and transferable skills sections for your resume. Positioning these sections at the top of your resume also means you can downplay your actual employment history... or at least make it secondary to your accomplishments and skills. A functional resume, rather than a traditional chronological resume, will also serve this purpose.
  - Develop both a traditional formatted resume and a scannable (text-only) resume. Since job-hunting has expanded greatly to include traditional methods as well as online methods, you really need to have both types.
  - Get your resume critiqued. Ask someone in your network -- possibly a former boss or college career office (most work with alumni) to review your new resume(s) and offer constructive criticism. We also offer professional resume critiques.
- 3. Resolve whether you are staying or relocating.** Now is the time to think about whether enough opportunities exist where you currently live, or whether you need or want to relocate.
- 4. Network, network, network.** Tell everyone you know that you are in the job market again. You don't need to tell them you were fired if you don't want to, but don't be ashamed of it



either, as labor figures indicate that many people have lost (or will lose) their jobs involuntarily. Your network includes your family, friends, former coworkers, former bosses, neighbors, friends of friends - just about anyone. These people may not be able to offer you a new job, but they may know someone who can, so they play a vital role in your job search. And once you find a new job, make sure you keep networking rather than waiting until you don't have a job to do so. Read much more about the art of networking.

5. **Revisit your references.** Depending on the circumstances surrounding your dismissal, you may or may not have a good reference from your former employer. Now is the time -- regardless -- to revisit your reference list. You need to contact these people (which you should already have done from #4), inform them that you are again on the job market, and ask if they will still be a reference for you. If you know your former employer might give you a bad reference, it is extremely important that you have other people who will rave about your accomplishments and abilities.
6. **Be prepared to work.** It's a cliché, but looking for a new job is now your full-time job. Stay focused and accomplish something every day.
7. **Face the tough question.** Be prepared with an answer when an interviewer asks you why you left your last job. Make sure you can articulate why your last job didn't work out and what you have learned from the experience. Never blame a former supervisor or employer -- and don't make excuses.
8. **Be prepared for rejection.** You may be a little extra sensitive because of being fired, but remember that there is always a degree of rejection in any job search -- so don't let it get you down. Keep looking forward.

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