

Layoff Survival Guide: How to Position Yourself in the Current Job Market

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A Step-by-Step Process for Success:

1. You've likely already applied immediately for unemployment benefits; if not, do so at this PA online unemployment benefit link: <https://bit.ly/3bt8R6o>. Even if you have experienced a partial layoff/reduced hours, you may still qualify for some unemployment benefits: <https://bit.ly/2Ulg0zX>
2. Ask your employer whether he/she is planning on rehiring you when the crisis is over, and keep in touch as we emerge from this situation. Don't be afraid to request healthcare benefit continuation and politely push for at least 1-3 months of employer-paid COBRA coverage.
3. States and communities have websites with information on unemployment and financial resources for those affected by COVID-19. Here are some for Pennsylvania (a google search for your specific area will uncover additional ones): <https://dced.pa.gov/resources/> • <https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx> • <https://www.pahomecare.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources> • <https://www.thesimpledollar.com/financial-wellness/coronavirus-financial-assistance/>
4. Consider creating separate short-term and long-term job search targets. Given the current massive layoffs, the job market has shifted from a candidate market to an employer market, meaning that there is fierce competition for limited positions. In the short-term, consider being willing to pursue employment in a lower-paying position or field. When the market returns to normal you can then resume your career path. Create a resume for the short term and a resume for emergence from the crisis.
5. There are industries and companies that are hiring right now. Here is information on them: <https://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-hiring-people-coronavirus-demand-2020-3> • <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/hiring-companies-see-thousands-employees-amid-coronavirus-pandemic/story?id=69767851> • <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/24-major-u-companies-hiring-200430718.html> • https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-o'connor-group_2/jobs/
6. To access immediately available positions, look here: www.indeed.com • https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-o'connor-group_2/jobs/ • www.SimplyHired.com • <https://bit.ly/2JkUqoQ>. Use a variety of titles when searching for employment on these sites. For example, if you want to work remotely, search terms could include: "virtual work," "remote work," "freelance," "work from home," "call center remote," "gig work."
7. To facilitate being hired, create a highly targeted, relevant resume. The content of your resume *must* be aligned with the parameters of the position on offer and present *relevant* skills and track record, or you will not be considered for hire, especially in the current market. Below are steps to create a targeted resume (examples of targeted resumes are available by scrolling to the bottom of this page: <http://carolyncottresumes.com/testimonials-samples/>)

Preparatory Steps:

- **Search multiple job openings and find *one* that best represents your current direction. Copy it onto a Word document.**
- **Underline the key points in the job description.**
- **Adjacent to each underlined item, write down:**
 - (1) a specific action, responsibility, or example relevant to the underlined point.**
 - (2) the impact of your action; where possible, quantify or conservatively guesstimate your impact. Examples of impact/outcomes might include: solved a specific problem, improved a process, measurably decreased response time, improved customer satisfaction, improved completion time, or increased productivity.**

Revamping Your Resume:

The resume should predominantly focus on the qualitative and quantitative benchmarks of performance that demonstrate your value to the employer for your desired position. Do not exaggerate. The point is to truthfully and compellingly lead the employer to the conclusion that you are a good fit for the position.

RESUME CONTENT

Summary:

- (1) Write a brief Summary paragraph that highlights your relevant skills, capabilities and contributions.**
- (2) Beneath the Summary paragraph provide a couple "teaser bullets" that provide specific evidence of the claims made in the paragraph.**

Experience:

- (1) Working in reverse chronology, create a short paragraph for each role. Briefly describe scope of responsibility (keep the content relevant to the targeted position)**
- (2) Use bullets to highlight achievements that are relevant to the targeted role.**

Examples of questions to help you pinpoint your achievements:

- **Suggestions or changes you've made to improve efficiency, productivity, processes, or technology usage? Outcomes?**
- **Have you contributed to increasing customer base, customer satisfaction, or customer retention? Quantify if possible.**
- **Performance against stated annual goals? Comparative performance against colleagues, if applicable?**
- **Selected for any special project assignments?**

Education:

- (1) Starting with your most recent degree and working backward, list the degree, institution, and (if not too long ago) the year the degree was awarded. If you do not have a degree but have credits toward one, you can write, for example:**

Credits toward B.A. in ____ (the field in which you have the most credits). Add any honors.

If you are a recent graduate, the Education section can precede the Experience section, and you can also include Representative Course Projects and/or Representative Courses (be sure what you include is relevant to the targeted position).

(2) Add Professional Development. List the names and the provider (for example: Leadership Training, American Management Association).

Additional Sections to Consider:

(1) Consider adding Volunteer or Professional Affiliations. These round out a view of who you are.

8. Use all job-search avenues to pursue employment: posted listings in print media and online, networking through LinkedIn, contacting companies and clients, conducting (telephone) informational interviews, leveraging contacts through professional organizations, and asking for contacts/introductions through people you know.

If you have questions, comments, or stories you would like to share with us, please email Carolyn Cott, sole proprietor of www.carolyncottresumes.com, at carolyn@carolyncottresumes.com or Marcia O'Connor, President & CEO of The O'Connor Group, www.TOCGRP.com, at moconnor@tocgrp.com