

Downsizing, Job Loss or Just Plain Fired! *How To Cope.*

The good news is that in today's world of downsizing, you are not alone. Being severed, fired, terminated –whatever the words, can translate into opportunity and challenge. Here are some practical suggestions for coping with downsizing.

1. **Know your benefits.** If there are meetings planned, attend and ask questions. Know what COBRA, outplacement, unemployment benefits and severance packages are all about. Listen to the questions others ask. Still in doubt? Talk to the HR department and use the Internet with its wealth of resources.
2. **Speaking of the Net,** there is no shortage of help there. Whether emotional support through articles, on-line therapy, and chat rooms—or more tangible support in the form of resume critique or job postings—the Internet is a terrific place to begin. No access? Make that your highest priority. Use the local copy shop, library or company resources if available to you, but a PC or laptop is no longer a luxury.
3. **Talk about it.** Getting “let go” is an experience shared by most of the working world. Some have written books about it! But don't keep it a secret. Not only will talking reduce the sting, but also friends and family are your best networking sources. But it hurts to talk about it? Again, the Internet can help with its anonymity. Share on a bulletin board or in a chat room to start.

4. **Use the EAP.** Now is the time to call a counselor and utilize the prepaid benefit your employer has provided. Not only will the counselor be an empathetic listener, practical suggestions will be offered for coping with the emotional distress as well as the process of coping and moving on. The EAP is usually available for some period, (usually thirty days) after termination.
5. **Maintain a normal lifestyle.** While it is not easy to relax, when the mind is taking you on a tour of homelessness, keep up your normal exercise routine—or if you don't have one, now is the time to start. Establish a schedule with about six hours a day devoted to job searching and then stop. Don't let this become a 24-hour obsession.
6. **No Bridge-burning.** Write a letter to the head of the corporation saying how much you've learned/enjoyed/appreciated, etc. working for this company. Bite your tongue if you're feeling like you'd rather accompany that person on a long walk off a short pier. Same with coworkers who are staying. Let them know in writing that your relationship has a plus and thank them for their support. This makes the recipient feel special and important. And, more likely to remember you when opportunities arise in the future.
7. **Ready, Fire, Aim?** Don't rush headlong into another job. Consider your future in terms of dreams that are unfulfilled. Or, where you'd like to be in five, ten years. Maybe now's the time to bite the school bullet, or finish a certification. Make yourself more valuable to the next employer.
8. **Finally, reaffirm yourself.** You are the same competent and valuable person you were an hour before this happened. Your skills and abilities have gotten you this far, and they'll get you to the next level. Focus on action steps and give yourself time and space to recuperate and gain energy for the job search.



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INTERVIEWING TIPS AND STRATEGIES

INTERVIEW TO GET AN OFFER

Recommendations for High Impact Interviewing

- **ATTITUDE!** Employers hire for attitude and personality, often as much as for skill level. Stay alert to all cues influencing the interview. Be alert physically so that your body language and energy communicate excitement about the job opportunity. Never let down mentally or physically. Be consistent with every person you encounter when you interview. Even the receptionist, may weigh in on whether you are a fit for the company.
- **FOCUS** on the interviewer, the company, the opening, and the questions asked. Eliminate distractions and self-absorption.
- **DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** Research the company before you interview. A firm's web page is a great place to get pertinent information about a company. Research articles & current events the company may be involved in. Past and present employees, along with mutual relationships are an excellent source of intel as well.
- **MASTER** a brief statement that says what you do to solve problems and to get things done. (A one-liner quote from a reference is a nice touch).
- **KNOW** how you excel. Answer the following questions: "How do you excel over your peers?" "How do you add value to your position and company?"
- **COMMUNICATE** your capacity to get up to speed quickly. Identify for the employer those qualities and skills that enable you to fit the company culture and the job demands.
- **BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS.** Prepare for follow up probes such as "How did you decide that?" "What did you do next?" "What advice did you offer in a particular situation?" The who, what & why to standard interview questions.
- **TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS.** Keep a positive attitude... try to smile, stand, keep your energy up. Place essentials near your phone — current resume, bullet points on key achievements, 5-7 questions to ask, your pen, and a folder for each company with the correct correspondence. Attitude & positive communication will make or break a phone interview.
- **BE** what the position is asking for. Do not interview with the objective of qualifying the job. Align your skill set with the position you are interviewing for.

402 W. Broadway, 25th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101
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619.595.0440 800.388.1178



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- **INTERVIEW TO GET AN OFFER.** Negotiation only occurs once you have an offer. Don't kill an interview because you think you aren't interested or because you've brought up your needs too early in discussion. There may be another position with the company that may suit you!
- **UNDERSTAND** that an interview is an opportunity to tell a company what you can do for them. Hold questions relating to what the company can do for you (e.g. benefits) until after an offer is made. Usually, if a firm is interested in extending an offer to you, the interviewer will provide benefit and other such information.
- **ASK QUESTIONS** that show your interest in the position and the company, that illustrate your understanding of the employer's needs. Make it apparent that you've researched the company.
- **PREPARE AND PRACTICE** answers to these questions. Although they may be phrased differently, you will be asked some variation during the interview process.
 - Why are you looking to change positions now?
 - In what way can you make a contribution to a company?
 - What has been a career disappointment
 - In what areas of your profession do you excel?
 - What sets you apart from your peers?
 - In what areas of your profession do you need more experience?
 - Who have been your mentors?
 - Describe how you interact with difficult personalities.
 - Describe how you balance the competing demands of executives?
 - How would you describe your communication style?
 - Share any cost savings initiative ideas you've generated/implemented.
 - Be ready to talk about those proverbial strengths and weaknesses!
- **BECOME THE INTERVIEWER – Top Questions YOU should ask**
 - Why is the position open?
 - What characteristics are you looking for in this role?
 - What do you perceive has a potential major frustration in this role?
 - What are the limits of the authority/responsibility of this role?
 - What type of support does this position receive?
 - How would you describe the company's most successful individuals?
 - What is the typical career path within the firm for this position?
 - What distinguishes this company from others in the marketplace?
 - What makes working here a special or unique opportunity?
 - How long have you been with the company? What makes you stay?
 - What are the next steps?

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- **FOLLOW-UP** with genuine interest and enthusiasm. Send a personalized thank you.

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BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

A resume is a selling tool outlining your experience and skills. A resume does its job successfully if it *does not* exclude you from consideration. Hiring Managers receive dozens of resumes a day. A well thought-out resume can help you stand out from the others and get you the interview for the job you want!

Here is a list of 8 commonly asked questions on writing the perfect resume:

1. What do hiring managers look for when they are reading a resume?

Hiring Managers look at a resume for 8 seconds, at most. Therefore it is vitally important your resume spells out your experience and attributes clearly. The design of your resume must highlight the most pertinent information.

- The pertinent information – titles, firms, tenure, software, areas of law and courts – must stand out. Use spacing, bolding, italicizing, and other formatting ticks to accomplish this.
- Keep together related job responsibilities; do not assume that others know what you do from your job title.
- Make sure to utilize key words from the job description for the position you are applying for.
- It is always a good idea to avoid personal pronouns (I, me, OR my)
- Make sure past positions are in the past tense
- Avoid adding personal information such as marital status and hobbies.
- Last but not least, it is important to make sure the resume is free of typos, misspellings, grammatical mistakes and inaccurate information. Errors in resumes cause potential employers to think that you do not pay attention to details.

2. How long should your resume be?

The average length of a resume today is approximately 2 pages; however, a longer or shorter resume may be appropriate depending upon your background. Although many job seekers still insist on a one page resume, there is no golden rule that says that must be the case. In this highly competitive legal environment, a brief summary of your skills is no longer effective. Generally it is not necessary to go back more than 10 years.

Remember when you do have a second page to put a small header on the top with your name, phone number and/or email address, and the page number. In case your first page gets separated from your second you want the Hiring Manager to still be able to contact you.

Also, never print front and back or two-sided. It's not professional. You can staple the sheets together for when you go in for an interview.

3. Does the type of paper really matter?

Generally Hiring Managers prefer to receive resumes via email so that they are able to easily parse into their database. However it is advisable to bring 3-5 copies of your resume on professional, high-quality paper to your interview.

4. Are there certain formats that work better?

There are two main formats most traditionally used for a resume – functional and chronological.

Functional: Organize your work experience by the functions you performed regardless of date. This format allows you to avoid calling attention to gaps in employment or poor tenure.

Chronological: Arrange your experience and education in a chronological order.

Although, there is no rule as to which one you should use, the most appealing resumes use a combination of both formats.

5. Can I use colored fonts or different fonts?

It is advisable to use a black font color and a font size no smaller than 10 point. The use of color and untraditional fonts can appear unprofessional and messy. Because the legal industry tends to be a more conservative industry, it is best to stick with more traditional styles. Also, do not use resume templates, use your own formatting and ideas.

6. Do I always need to include a cover letter?

Yes! Make sure your first paragraph provides reasons as to why you are qualified for the particular position for which you are applying. It should be brief and to the point. Avoid negativity and check for spelling and grammar errors.

7. Is it important to change my resume based on the job I am applying for?

It is crucial to change your resume to reflect the position for which you are applying. In fact, if you have a wide range of experiences and skills it is advisable to have a few different resumes that you can easily work with. Also, use the verbiage in the job ad as your model. Employers search key words when they are looking for people to fill specific positions.

8. How do I put my resume together online?

With the internet so prevalent these days, many job seekers are instructed to apply online. Here are a few tips to insure your success:

- Follow directions. Be careful to enter the correct data in the correct field.
- Create a skills-inventory section even if the application doesn't require it. You might put this in a comments section.

- If the company offers an optional assessment test online, take it. Companies will often screen out those candidates.
- Make sure your resume can hold its own in a very simple format. Fancy bullets, text, italics and bold do not convert well in an electronic application.
- Another use for the comment section: use it to demonstrate that you've done research on the company and industry.