

Job Searching While Still Employed

The Opportunities and Risks of Job Searching While You're Still Employed

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Introduction

This report pertains to job searchers that are looking for employment anticipating an involuntary termination or layoff, or a voluntary termination because the current job is not meeting career expectations.

There are several things a job searcher should consider doing while still employed, namely:

1. Document your network with your current employer, its suppliers, its contractors, and its consultants. Do not violate any confidentiality agreements.
2. Make copies of all performance appraisals, rewards, or other documents that provide evidence of your strengths, skills, accomplishments, and the benefits the employer has recognized because of your contributions. Do not copy any confidential documents.
3. Beware of the dos and don'ts of how to conduct a job search while still employed

All three of these points will be covered in more detail below.

Opportunity #1: Document Your Network



1. Within your current employer (and past employers) are friends, colleagues, and acquaintances that fall into one of the following categories.
 - Employees, supervisors, managers, and peers with whom you've developed a close working relationship. You respect them, and they have a mutual respect for you.
 - Employees in other departments for whom you have developed a lot of respect. You may not have developed a close working relationship, but you

- have collaborated with them in some way such that you respect them, and they likely respect you as well.
2. While employed by this company, you have developed connections with respected individuals that work for contractors, suppliers, and/or consultants. You enjoy working with them and communicating with them. You have a professional admiration for them and they seem to have a mutual respect for you.

All the people that you've identified in points #1 and #2 above are part of your network. These are people that could be valuable connections when you've left your current position or future positions. Start developing a networking list. Keep this list confidential and do not leave it on your desk where others can see it. Start a collection of business cards, particularly from contractors, suppliers and/or consultants. Collecting of business cards is something most professionals do, so this is less of a tip-off that you're planning to leave the company.

Opportunity #2: Get Evidence of Your Contributions to Your Present Employer



You need evidence to convince a prospective employer that you've impacted the existing employer's business by the results of your work. Examples of the kind of evidence that you'll need can be found in:

- Past performance appraisals
- Awards that you've received for the contributions you've made

- Metrics that demonstrated key company performance data such as growth in year-over-year annual sales revenue, gross margin, net income.
- Awards from customers for excellence in on-time deliveries, improvements in product quality, customer service, etc.
- Introduction of new products
- Achievements in penetrating new markets

Do not include any company confidential information. Only include information that has been communicated to the public. You won't be providing copies of these documents to networking contacts, prospective company employees, or to the media in any form. But you will be using this information to help you identify strengths, skills, and accomplishments.

How to Minimize the Risks of a Job Search While Still Employed



Most [professionals](#) recognize the value of searching for a new job while you're still employed. At the same time, they'll tell you that you must follow some strict guidelines on how to conduct that search. Here are some of the recommendations.

Andy Teach, author of 'From Graduation to Corporation' says "When you're working, your professional network is working for you because you're constantly interacting with your industry contacts. They can inform you about jobs you may not be aware of. If you're not working, you're out of sight and out of mind".

There is a lot of truth in what Andy says, but if you have identified these professional contacts while still employed, it will be easier to reconnect with them when you've left your current employer and there will be less chance your current employer will get tipped off that you're planning to leave your current position.

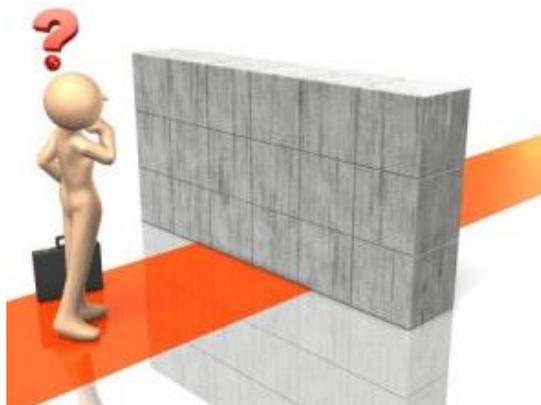
Sara Menke, chief executive of Premier, a boutique staffing firm in San Francisco, says "having a job while looking for a job makes you that much more attractive to a potential employer. Companies want to hire the best-of-the-best and [those people] are usually employed. Plus, quitting your job before having a job is a substantial risk that you should avoid".

To avoid a negative outcome and increase your chances for a successful job search while will employed, here are some recommendations.

1. [Keep your job search to yourself](#): "Don't advertise on social media or tell your co-workers that you are looking for another job or don't like the one you have. Even if you tell one person, that's one person too many. The more people who know, the better the chance that your current company will find out you are job searching".
2. [Update your LinkedIn Profile](#): Update your LinkedIn profile ASAP. With so many professionals on LinkedIn, having a complete profile won't raise any suspicions. Don't indicate that you're looking for new job opportunities on your profile, in case your existing manager happens to monitor your page. "Turn off your notifications so that your profile updates are not broadcast across the network. Keep your listed skills updated and consistent with what you do at your current job. A dramatic change in your online profile, particularly if it does not reflect the position you currently hold, can serve as a tip-off".
3. [Email Address](#): "Don't use your work email address for job hunting. Use your personal account or set up a free web-based email account specifically for job searching.
4. [Phone Numbers](#): "Don't put your office phone number on your resume and job applications. Use your cell phone number" or other alternative number that only you answer.
5. [Never bad-mouth your current employer](#): "Even if you are in a bad situation with a boss, it's prudent to take the high road, demonstrate some class and ensure that you don't burn any bridges".
6. [Don't post your resume on job boards](#): Nothing kills a discrete job search faster than receiving message and voicemails from recruiters. Focus on targeted networking to make the right connections.
7. [Schedule interviews during non-work hours](#): "Remember the key is to keep productivity up while at work, and missing work hours can directly have an effect on this. Don't create a situation where your employer will question your loyalty due to your absence at obvious work hours".

8. [Don't use the company computer, internet, fax machine, or phone](#) in your search: Most companies track your internet usage, so anything related to your job search may raise suspicions. Your company may also track your phone use. Use your cell phone for all job search telephone conversations.
9. [Don't use any current co-workers or supervisors as references](#): "If the potential employer makes the call before making you an offer, you run the risk of surprising your current manager before anything is finalized".
10. [Ask your recruiter or prospective employer to be discreet](#): "Be clear and specific about your need for discretion. If you are keeping your cards close to your chest and your recruiter [or employer] is unwilling to honor that preference, pick another professional [or employer]".
11. [Don't interview from work](#): "Many employers use phone interviews for first round screening. Don't schedule a phone interview for a time when you are at work. Try to schedule on your lunch hour, early in the day before work, or late in the day after work. Do it on your own time and on your own personal phone.
12. [Bring a change of clothes](#): "Don't walk into the office wearing a suit if your normal office attire is business casual or casual. Bring a change of clothes and change elsewhere before you head out to the interview and back to work".
13. [Don't mention your job search in social media](#): It may find its way back to your current employer and prospective employers may view your lack of discretion unfavorably.
14. [Always be honest if confronted by your supervisor or manager](#): If your supervisor, manager, or human resources clearly and in detail confronts you about your intentions to leave the company, don't lie.
15. [When to give notice](#): Never give notice to your existing employer, until you have a firm written offer and you have accepted it in writing. Wait for your prospective employer to check your references, get your drug test results, and confirm your start date. Then you can give notice.

Don't Consider Jobs in Other Industries as a Barrier



I am fortunate that my first job after graduating from college was an excellent job with an excellent employer. However, changes in the marketplace began hurting my further development within my career at that employer. While still employed, I began looking for a new job and I accepted a position in a different industry. Most of my skills were transferrable. That career decision turned out to be an excellent choice. Now, many years later, as a Job Transition Coach, I'm surprised by job seekers who are reluctant to look for jobs in a different industry. To them, changing industries is looked upon as a barrier. It could be:

- Their lack of knowledge about the types of jobs available in other industries.
- Worry they will need to acquire a whole new set of skills to work in that industry.
- Worry that they will have to take a pay cut if they move into a new industry.
- A misconception that all the experience, accomplishments, and skills they've obtained in their last career will go to waste if they move into a new industry.

In many cases, those fears are ill-founded. It's true that a project manager that desires to become a veterinarian will find that their education, on-the-job training, experience, and accomplishments are not transferrable to a new position as a veterinarian. However, a sales person in one industry will often find that they can quickly adapt to a sales position in new industry.

Many of the skills you've developed over the years will be transferrable to other industries. This applies to soft skills and in many cases, it will apply to some of your hard skills. Investigation into other industries may lead you to find that:

- Your education, experience, skills, and strengths will make it possible for you to quickly begin contributing in a new industry.
- Where there may be some need to learn new terminology, or practices, unique to a new industry, that learning process will be quick and will not hold you back.
- You should not have to take a pay cut to move to a new industry. In many cases you'll find that you'll get a pay increase.
- Your past experiences, accomplishments, and skills will not go to waste.

Categories and examples of transferable skills include:

1. People/helping skills

- Teaching
- Guiding
- Listening
- Acting as a liaison
- Counseling
- Sympathizing

2. People management/persuasion skills
 - Advising
 - Leading
 - Delegating
 - Negotiating
 - Selling
 - Persuading
3. Creative/artistic/design skills
 - Writing
 - Acting
 - Decorating
 - Designing
 - Brainstorming
 - Improvising
 - Conceptualizing
4. Math/science/theoretical skills
 - Investigating
 - Synthesizing
 - Diagnosing
 - Observing
 - Theorizing
5. Organizational/data/detail skills
 - Monitoring
 - Coordinating
 - Scheduling
 - Expediting
 - Budgeting
6. Outdoor/mechanical/action-oriented skills
 - Using eye-hand dexterity skills
 - Assembling skills
 - Building skills
 - Repairing skills
 - Fabricating skills

The above examples of skills are soft skills you can take with you to a new industry, or a new career. Depending on your choice of a position in a new industry, you will often find that many of your hard skills will also be transferrable.