

Pandemic Resume Makeover

If you've been affected by a recent job loss, you can come out of it with a better career. Start by putting your to mind to improvement and thinking strategically about your experience.

The coronavirus pandemic has caused an unprecedented upheaval to the economy and job market, leaving many of us facing uncertain futures.

With thousands of businesses shutting down across the globe, and entire industries grinding to a halt overnight, it's likely to be one of the most challenging periods that job seekers have seen in their lifetime.

So, if you've been affected by the economic fallout of COVID-19, here are some tips to help you navigate the new version of a "normal" job market, optimize your résumé accordingly, and land the job you need right now.

First, don't panic

Although we are living in worrying times, it's worth remembering that events like these have happened in the past (and are likely to happen again) and they do eventually pass; rest assured, things will return to a somewhat similar version of normal soon.

The Great Depression of the 1930s was a tragedy which saw millions of Americans lose their jobs. But after recovering, the U.S. went on to boast the strongest economy in the world for many years.

So, it's worth reminding yourself that although things may look bleak now—if you're able to ride out the storm, you will be all right.

You may have to put off the pursuit of your dream job for a year, or you may have to take a temporary reduction in income. But if you do as much as possible to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on you right now, you'll be in much stronger position to get back on track when things return to normal.

Pinpoint where are the opportunities

As the old saying goes, "When one door closes, another opens." This adage is particularly true when looking at the job market.

Although we are seeing industries such as hospitality, leisure, and aviation closing their doors during the pandemic, there are other industries seeing huge spikes in activity. Food retailers and fitness equipment suppliers are seeing massive surges in demand, and many companies with services in areas such as videoconferencing and contact tracing are growing their businesses to meet the new challenges being brought to our society by social-distancing measures.

Pay attention to current business news and do some online research to discover which industries are taking off and likely to be hiring new staff. Don't be afraid to think outside the box, and consider companies and roles that you wouldn't have under normal circumstances—remember, this is only going to be a temporary move.

Identify your transferable skills

Once you have started to build a list of companies, industries, and potential jobs—it's time to figure out what you have to offer them. Making a career move can be daunting, especially if it's one you didn't want to make. But you'll probably find that you already have a number of skills that are in-demand across many industries.

You just need to identify the ones which are most relevant to the jobs and companies you will be applying for—so that you can make them prominent in your new résumé.

Scan through company websites, career pages, and job adverts, taking note of the most sought-after skills and knowledge that match your own. Once you identify these attributes, you'll be in a much stronger position to create an attractive résumé.

Enroll in courses

If you're making a career move, it's likely that you will be missing a few of the candidate requirements from your new target jobs—but don't let that stop you.

If you need to learn how to use a new software tool, or even the fundamentals of a whole new profession, it's highly likely that you will be able to find an online course on the topic.

The internet is packed full of learning resources on every subject, and often you will be able to find them for very cheap, or even free—on sites such as Udemy.

You don't have to get a master's degree in your new chosen field, but if you can take a few short courses and put them at the top of your résumé, it shows that you're dedicated and you at least have some basic knowledge in the new field.

Rewrite your résumé from scratch

Your current résumé was written for the employers you were targeting pre-coronavirus, so it's not likely to appeal to new employers.

Therefore, aim to turn a new leaf and completely rewrite your résumé, tailoring it directly to the new employers you will be targeting. Ensure that you highlight all of the transferable skills you identified, and make prominent any courses you have recently taken.

In particular, you'll want to rebrand yourself with a new profile at the top of your résumé, which provides an elevator-pitch-style introduction and explains why you're the perfect fit for the roles you are targeting. Avoid the temptation to focus on your past roles too much, and instead focus on explaining how your skills could benefit employers and help them achieve their goals.

Turn to your network

In addition to approaching plenty of recruiters and hiring managers with tailored applications, don't forget to tap into your existing network.

Change your LinkedIn profile to show people that you are looking for a new role, and actively reach out to ex-colleagues and managers. You don't always need to directly ask them for work, but you can just drop them a quick friendly message, or comment on a post and strike up a conversation—just so that they are aware that you are looking, should anything come up.

Job hunting in the current climate may be tough, but with a reinvented approach and persistent work, you can secure one of today's new opportunities.

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