

How to Manage Your Career During an Economic Downturn

Consider the following tips:

Take stock:

Evaluate your professional standing and key trends within your industry, company, and profession. What do you need to change? How can you do it? How does your profession look five years from now? Two years from now? What threats do you foresee? What opportunities exist?

Based on your analysis, develop a comprehensive action plan that will help you leverage your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

Network aggressively:

Networking is not a post-layoff or when-you-feel-like-doing-it activity. All successful professionals incorporate networking as an integral and active component of their career management plan.

Tradeshows, conferences, industry and social events, online networking tools—networking opportunities have never been so easily accessible.

Position yourself:

What is your value? What is so unique about you that employers will want to retain you? **We all have something unique to offer** and if you can develop a powerful value proposition demonstrating how indispensable you are, you will be in a much better position than most professionals.

Invest in professional development:

This is the Information Age, an environment in which information becomes obsolete faster than fashion. Through continuing education programs and other professional development efforts, it is very important to **stay abreast with the cutting-edge of your profession.**

Demonstrate leadership and the ability to take on challenges:

The economy inevitably imposes financial strains on any company and under such conditions every employee is expected to do more—take more work, manage multiple tasks, lead projects, and epitomize "cross-functional" in every sense of the term. **Try to volunteer on projects and take on leadership roles.** The key is to demonstrate how you can contribute toward the organization's success and deliver an optimal ROI for the company.

Update your resume:

Update your resume **every month, if not every week.** Highlight your recent accomplishments and create a powerful document that will position you as the perfect solution for any employer's needs.

Keep your options open:

With all the above strategies, keep your eyes open to new opportunities. Through a portfolio of job search strategies, including networking, you should **generate a steady stream of job leads.**

Effective career management is an ongoing effort. Once employers recognize how valuable you are, recession or growth, they will do everything they can to retain you.

Adapted from Salisbury University Career Services. Author Nimish Thakkar is a sought-after career management coach and professional resume writer.