



## Finding Work in a Down Economy

With the current economy being compared to the Great Depression, it may seem challenging to find a new position if you have been laid off. In March 2010, the US Department of Labor reported unemployment was at 9.7%; so challenging – yes. Impossible – no. Here are a few things you can do to help speed the job search process and provide an edge on your competition:

1. **Customize your resume for the job.** Review the job requirements and preferences thoroughly and include all your related skills in your resume. If you don't have a specific skill that matches the requirement, be sure to list anything similar. Also, detail any experiences where you have picked up new skills quickly. This can make or break your chance for an interview.
2. **Check career websites of the companies that interest you.** Many companies post their openings only on their own site when a new job opens up. If you find something you like, submit your resume as instructed. While waiting to hear back, go to sites such as LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) to find people who work there and try to network with them.
3. **Post your resume confidentially.** This enables you to work with companies directly, as well as with recruiting firms. Some companies instruct recruiters to not submit candidates from such places as Monster, CareerBuilder, etc., stating they already have access to those sites. The dilemma is they often do not have an internal structure set up allowing them to daily go through the many sites, which means solid candidates can be easily missed. Posting confidentially means you can still be “searched” and also work with a good recruiter who may have an established relationship with the manager you want to work for.
4. **Network, network, network.** Join user groups, organizations, societies, associations, etc. Anything you can find that is related to your industry and skill set, you should be aware of and potentially a member of as well. Be sure to tell everyone you know you are looking for a new job: neighbors, fellow church members, family, friends, etc. The old adage, “It’s not what you know, but who you know” is often true.
5. **Put your best foot forward.** Your first impression is crucial and you never know when you could meet someone who could help you. Always, always, have your shoes polished, your clothes pressed, and be well groomed. You should have a 30-second “elevator pitch” ready and be confident. Remember – you only get one chance at a first impression.
6. **Become an expert online researcher.** By learning how to do Boolean searches, (<http://www.internettutorials.net/boolean.asp>) you can harness the power of the internet in a whole new way. Your newly polished research skills will bring you to websites more specific to your search and your skill set, and save you time in the process. Candidates and colleagues alike have been amazed at the results they have achieved by implementing these powerful tools and techniques.

7. **Be a realist when it comes to compensation.** Consider the current market and your competition. If you demand more than others with a similar background, you will often lose out. When the market turns and you have proven yourself, you can then approach management to ask for a fair increase.
8. **Follow up!** “The squeaky wheel gets the grease” also rings true when job hunting. Avoid stalking a manager/recruiter of course, but following up with someone you have submitted your resume to every few weeks keeps your name on the top of their minds. Keep it brief with an email or quick call. Go the extra step and send them an article about their company or industry. This shows you are serious about the position as well as up to date on current, related events.

According to the Society of Human Resource Management’s (SHRM) Labor Market Outlook (LMO), which examines hiring trends across a six-month spectrum, the results for the third quarter of 2009 reveal that, while many HR professionals are still having difficulty pinpointing their hiring plans, the most damaging stretch of the recession's job market may finally be in the past. Keep a good interview suit ready, your resume updated and a positive attitude, and you will find a new job before you know it.

# # #

*Christine Conwell ([www.linkedin.com/in/christineconwell](http://www.linkedin.com/in/christineconwell)) is CEO of ECC Hiring Solutions, a women-owned national recruiting firm. She has been in the recruiting business since 1996 and is co-founder of ECC LP and founder of ECC Hiring Solutions. She is a member of the Women's Business Council Southwest (WBCS ); Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC); and Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and has been featured in the Dallas Business Journal. She holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of North Texas.*

ECC Hiring Solutions. ©2010. All Rights Reserved.