

RPG Renaissance Personnel Group

It's Not Personal, It's the Pandemic

What To Do If You Are Laid Off
How To Begin Your Job Search During a Global Pandemic

Watch the recording on our website!
RenaissancePersonnel.com/Resources/Webinars

LAUREN CRIDER

HEATHER KITSKO
SHRM, CTRM

“A layoff is not a reflection of your talent or value to the company.”

The Covid-19 Impact on Hiring:

This pandemic effectively hit the “pause button” for the majority of businesses. An Employers Council survey for April 2020 stated that:

- Companies with 1-50 employees
 - *35% postponed hiring*
- Companies with 50-500 employees (major portion of Arizona’s businesses reside in this level)
 - *59-61% postponed hiring*

Layoff VS Furlough:

A layoff is when a company chooses to reduce headcount and the position is eliminated.

A furlough is a temporary reduction in workforce with the intent to bring back the employee in their role when the business is capable of doing so.

Heather’s Layoff:

Heather was a Senior Talent Acquisition Leader for a company that was negatively impacted by Covid. Heather had a sense that she may be laid off in the near future as hiring was effectively halted for most businesses.

Heather mentally prepared herself for a layoff as her role was directly measured by the amount of positions she was able to fill with qualified candidates.

Heather started feeling the impending layoff nearly a week in advance which gave her time to prepare herself for the painful conversation that could happen at any time. When her supervisor gave her the news, she was able to maintain a professional and cordial demeanor to preserve her relationship with the company.

Heather explains that the hardest part of a layoff is working through the emotions that follow. Similar to the grieving process, everyone experiences it differently and at their own pace.

How to Handle:

1. Prepare yourself for the possibility – don't be blindsided by a layoff
2. Keep your emotions in check – stay cordial during the conversation as you will likely need a recommendation from your supervisor for your next position
3. Ask the right questions!
 - a. Severance package? Details of severance?
 - b. Benefits? Will the company continue to pay? When will they run out?
 - c. Eligible for rehire?
 - d. Furlough? Still receive partial pay? Cover benefits? Expected furlough end date?
 - e. PTO? Will I be paid for my PTO? Do I have to take vacation first?

Grace Period:

Give yourself a cooling off period of at least 3-4 days, if not more. You may be frustrated, angry, and overall emotional which will create a road block for yourself. Allow a grace period to process your situation – if you don't, you may come off hostile to prospective employers.

We often get calls immediately after someone becomes unemployed (especially during recessions) because they think they must begin their job search immediately. Unconscious emotion is present and at the surface which will impact your network negatively.

Wait until you can talk about your story without your blood pressure rising or other reflexive feelings popping out. Once you are calm and objective, you are ready to get back out there. Your network is extremely important to leverage for your next position- don't burn your bridges!

Where do I start? *Build a Plan:*

1. Update Resume – add your most recent position and responsibilities
 - a. Have others review your resume and provide advice
2. Update LinkedIn Profile – ensure your profile tells the same story as your resume
 - a. *Watch our next webinar for detailed advice on how to optimize your LinkedIn profile*
3. Create an Excel Spreadsheet

a. Job Search Tab

- i. Mark any job you have applied to, the company, their website, when you applied, how you found the position, when you connected with someone, and their follow up contact information

b. Network Tab

- i. Go through your entire social network and reach out to anyone that could help
- ii. Add who you spoke with, what you discussed, and any new connections or contacts you can make through them
- iii. People often find positions through relationships rather than applying as a stranger
Foster and facilitate relationships as they may come in handy!

c. Recommendations Tab

- i. Ask for references from your previous supervisors, people you have managed, clients, vendors, and anyone who can attest to your ability

d. Continuing Education

- i. This is the perfect time to reinvent yourself
 1. Get a new certification
 2. Learn a new skill or software
 - a. *Lynda.com* is an excellent and affordable resource for self-guided tutorials on a variety of software at different challenge levels
 3. Read scholarly articles and gain knowledge

e. Previous Duties:

- i. Chronicle what you did at your previous jobs, what responsibilities you liked best, and what you will seek out in your next position
- ii. Write about your achievements and who you helped along the way

Set Realistic Expectations:

Be realistic about what your job search looks like; it is unlikely that you will find a perfect position right away. It is probable that you will not find jobs at the same level or salary that you were at so you must adjust compensation expectations.

No one can predict what the economy will look like when this pandemic is over or the pace at which this recession will lift over time.

Until the ideal position comes along, it is advantageous to work in a similar field even if you take a title and pay cut.

How to Address the Layoff During Your Search: *KEEP IT SHORT, SWEET, & TO THE POINT!*

If a hiring manager asks why you left your previous position- make sure to remain tactful and manage your emotions. It is never appropriate to throw your previous employer under the bus. The less you say the better; don't go down the rabbit hole and end up answering a question that was not asked.

Something as simple as: "I was laid off due to the impact of Covid-19 on my company" will suffice.

Every hiring manager understands this reason. Stay truthful and professional.

Summary:

1. Prepare Yourself
2. Address the Situation
3. Develop Plan of Attack
4. Set Realistic Expectations
5. Understand Factors Out of Your Control