

## **New Year's Resolutions – Being Prepared in Uncertain Times**

### **Pay attention to your environment**

If you suspect things might not be quite right at work, they probably aren't. Layoffs often seem to come out of the blue but most likely there were warning signs like hiring freezes, vast reduction in expenses and executive "behind closed door meetings".

### **Update your résumé**

No matter how things are going, it's always a good idea to have your résumé updated, says Tom Musbach, managing editor for Yahoo! HotJobs. "An updated résumé is key. Think of your résumé as a billboard not an encyclopedia," he says. "Keep it short and tight by including action verbs and performance metrics. It's always best to update your résumé regularly, while you are still employed, so that you don't get overwhelmed by urgency that might cloud your judgment or résumé-writing reflection."

### **Get outside your comfort zone**

It's no secret that networking is key in a job search, but the word fills many people with dread, says University of Pittsburgh's Shawn Graham. "We do it every day, whether we consider it networking or not," he says. "Think about relationships you have inside the business or outside. Where do you have those pre-existing relationships with people every day through work? That's a great place to start."

Experts believe that in tough economic times, it's crucial to think in as broadly as possible about who might make an effective contact. "Right now it's good to cast a wide net," says Lisa Mininni, author of "Me, Myself and Why? The Secrets to Navigating Change," (PM Publishing, 2007). She offers a few suggestions for expanding your Rolodex. Utilize social networking and start with people you know. "They can make introductions for you," she says. Additionally, get involved with your professional associations and volunteer in community activities, especially ones in which you may have a professional interest. Yahoo's Musbach adds, "Follow up with every person you meet. A handwritten note letting someone know you enjoyed meeting them is priceless today and worth every minute." Also, don't turn down invitations that seem worthless – you never know whom you might meet.

### **Do your homework**

Networking and a great résumé may get you in the door but there's still an interview (or more) before you land a new job. Never go into an interview unprepared, says Graham, especially in a market that he feels is more competitive. "It's even more important to make sure your résumé, correspondence and interview prep are spot on," he says. Know the industry of the company you're interviewing with, names of senior leadership, stock price if it's a publicly traded company and names of its competitors.

Additionally, Graham says it's critical to nail the question: Why do you want to work for us? "Companies want to hear that you understand who they are and what they're all about and not because you're in the same neighborhood or because it's a really big company," he says. "Every hire has got to count so it's really important they are convinced you want that job at that company."

### **Works Cited:**

Dana Carman, New Year's job resolutions for tough times

[http://www.philly.com/philly/jobs/resources/New\\_Years\\_job\\_resolutions\\_for\\_tough\\_times.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/jobs/resources/New_Years_job_resolutions_for_tough_times.html)

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