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What Does the Coronavirus Pandemic Mean for Your Job Search?

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Coronavirus Pandemic

Take-Aways

- Don't rush your job search.
- Find new ways to network and connect with hiring managers.
- Learn all you can about potential employers.
- Brush up your existing skills or acquire new ones.

Recommendation

Searching for a job in the midst of a pandemic may seem like a fools' errand; but don't toss your resume in the trash quite yet. According to the experts interviewed in Lisa Rabasca Roepe's article for The Muse, job seekers can still make use of this period of uncertainty to network, expand their skills, and otherwise work on their employment prospects. Hiring may be on hold, Roepe writes, but that could change at any time. The article offers six helpful strategies that all those on the hunt for a new job can employ, even while the world is on lockdown.

Summary

Don't rush your job search.

Unless you have a pressing need to find a new job as soon as possible, you may wish to put your search on hold until companies have a firmer grasp on how the pandemic will change their prospects and practices in the near and long term. Use the time you might otherwise spend applying in thinking about the kind of work you truly aspire to do. Make a list of the industries, companies and roles which interest you most, and only then start searching for potential openings and looking for networking opportunities which fit with those criteria.

"Take advantage of the slowing job market by getting clarity about where you want to work and the type of role and title you're seeking."

If you are looking for work because you dislike your current job, ask yourself if there is any way to make your current employment situation better and follow through on those ideas. If you need to start earning urgently, consider taking a temporary position in one of the industries actively hiring during the pandemic such as online learning companies, grocery stores, delivery services and communication companies like Zoom and Slack. You might also think about applying for jobs outside of your current role, but which would fit well with your background and skill set. Someone with marketing experience could fulfill any number of communications positions, for example.

Find new ways to network and connect with hiring managers.

Look for online networking opportunities, from Facebook and LinkedIn groups, to virtual events. Make sure that anything you post or share in such online settings is relevant and professional. Practice video chatting with a friend and get their feedback on how you look and sound during your conversation. Once you feel confident using digital meeting tools, you can arrange video conferences with networking contacts.

"Networking should be driven by what the company needs and how it matches up with your superpower," Moser says. 'It's also an opportunity to demonstrate what type of employee you would be.'"

If you want to follow up with or initiate contact with a hiring manager or other professional contact, approach from a place of empathy and helpfulness. Many hiring managers are overwhelmed at the moment

helping current employees shift to working online. So if you are checking on the results of an interview, for example, make sure your email acknowledges the unusual and stressful circumstances the hiring manager may be facing. You might also mention any of your skills or past experiences – such as leading online teams – which could help the hiring manager at this time. You can also connect with hiring managers on LinkedIn and post thoughtful replies to any content they share.

Learn all you can about potential employers.

Nothing reveals as much about a company's leadership and culture as a crisis. Get the scoop on how potential employers support their employees during trying times – are they, for instance, allowing people to work from home, or are mass layoffs occurring? Follow companies you aspire to work for on social media, set up Google news alerts and listen to their updates to investors. If you end up in an interview, you can then put the knowledge you gained about the company during this pandemic to work: You can show you understand the leadership's concerns and offer ideas for how you could further the company's goals, if they hire you.

Brush up your existing skills or acquire new ones.

As you search job listings, look carefully at the required or desired skills listed for each position. Ask yourself, could you improve or acquire any of the skills named in the job post? Doing so could make you a more desirable candidate. Fortunately, there are many free resources nowadays which can help you brush up your skills in a variety of fields, including digital marketing and data science. EdX classes (online courses from top universities) are a great place to start, as are Microsoft tutorials.

"It's true that economists are predicting a recession, but career experts say it's best to keep networking and applying, provided you change your approach a bit to acknowledge these are uncertain times."

Don't panic if you see job postings diminish or disappear. Everyone is still in the process of adjusting to the new normal. Companies may not be hiring at this exact moment, but hiring will ramp up again in the future. The steps you take now in terms of relationship and skill-building will bear fruit if you remain patient and diligent.

About the Author

Lisa Rabasca Roepe is a freelance journalist who writes about workplace culture, entrepreneurship and technology. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Fast Company* and the *Christian Science Monitor*.



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