

Managing Downsizing and Lay Offs



When Still Employed or Negotiating Your Departure

- Meet with someone from your employer's Human Resources Department to learn which benefits you are entitled to, such as:
 - Continuance of health and insurance benefits (learn what you are entitled to, how to obtain them, who pays, etc.)
 - Accrued pension and vacation benefits
 - Possible severance pay and eligibility for unemployment pay
 - Possible outplacement services (paid for by your employer)
- Ask for letters of recommendation from your supervisors, co-workers, and clients

First Steps After Downsizing

- Apply for unemployment benefits (WI residents: <http://unemployment.wisconsin.gov>)
- Determine which health care benefits may be available to you:
 - HIPAA (general info): <http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/legalissues/a/hipaa.htm>
 - COBRA (government site): www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra/html
- Review your financial resources and determine how long they will last:
 - Evaluate your fixed and discretionary spending habits; cut non-essentials
 - Create a budget to preserve your funds

Planning Your Future

Before jumping into a job search, take time to consider what you want to do next in your work career and then create a plan based on these considerations:

- Which work activities were most/least rewarding in your past positions?
- Which skills sets do you most enjoy using?
- What types of projects/work engage you?
- Which industries, firms, or jobs focus on these skills and interests?
- Is it time to switch industries or fields? If so, will you need additional training?

Resources to Help

- Research resources at your alma maters (e.g. www.alverno.edu/careerstudio and www.alverno.edu/alumnae).
- Hire a career transition coach. You may want to take career interest assessments, review resume writing and interviewing techniques, and create a career action plan.
- Surround yourself with support from formal or informal groups and family and friends.

What NOT to Do

- Let anger or disappointment dominate your conversations. Every contact is a potential networking contact, so it is important to exude a positive attitude. A negative attitude could put a toll on your search for the right job and it could also get in the way of your long-term happiness and health.
- Start a job search without thinking through the process.
- Buy into a "one size fits all" approach to resume writing, cover letters and job postings.
- Isolate yourself from others.