

"After the Shock, What Do I Do?"

James O. Armstrong

Men and women have asked me, as the Editor of NowWhatJobs.net, exactly what motivated me to write my book and, subsequently, to start my website? Here's my response.

Actually, I went through a rightsizing/downsizing exercise on three separate occasions during the decade of the 1990s. So I personally experienced what my book, *"Now What? Discovering Your New Life and Career After 50,"* is about on a personal level. And I can tell you that one of the keys is this: Instead of doing the minimum in the search process for a new job, you have to do the MAXIMUM. Instead of sending out one or two resumes each week, you have to work at getting a job as though it was your full-time endeavor. It is literally a job to get a job.

Make a plan

When people are downsized, the very first thing they need to do is to sit down and write out their plan. That plan needs to include interacting with friends, relatives, people at their current company plus men and women in their industry. The search process needs to include a results-based resume, where you focus on your accomplishments in your current and past jobs. This process also needs to include a visit to the local unemployment office to check out what government programs might be available for you in your unique circumstances. Plus, it needs to include an aggressive approach to looking for a job every day, as though this effort was your full-time job. In this way, you will be successful sooner.

Important: Don't ever consider giving up because at the moment you choose to quit you've already failed.



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The more education the better

Part of the strategy which constitutes a winning formula is this: More education is always better to have. For example, we know that for most of this past year the unemployment rate for college graduates has been between 1.8% and 2.0% in North America. So, in essence, there are virtually no college graduates without a job. As a first step, if at all possible, go back to school to finish high school by getting a GED, for example. Next, consider either going to a local community college for two years to get an Associate's degree or go to a trade school. Or, you can choose to go back to college and finish your Bachelor's degree. Or, consider going for your Master's degree or even a professional credential.

The more education you complete, the better off you will be, because of the lower unemployment rate for your higher education level.

Education and training are critical. The formula I have found is this: The more education you have, the less vulnerable you will be to being downsized, rightsized or losing your job. Plus, you will have an easier time finding a job on the next round, even if you find yourself temporarily out of employment. Remember that everything having to do with education and training is part of your resume going forward, whether you're in your current job, in a future job in a different company or even in a different industry.

In addition, many companies offer training as one dimension of your benefit package. For example, I remember when I worked for McGraw-Hill, you literally had to go through so much training and/or

education every year in order to meet your annual objectives. In other words, it was an explicit requirement of the job. Plus, each of us needs to realize that the overall job market is constantly changing, which means that we need to continue to update our skills, as well.

Retraining assistance

In the United States, please understand that if you've lost a job from a manufacturing company, in many instances, there will be assistance for displaced workers. This analysis even includes money to go back to school in order to get more education and/or training. So, it's important to check out your County Jobs office to see what's available for you in your particular circumstances.

Accomplishments go into your resume

One of the typical mistakes people make is this: They tend to look at their past jobs in terms of specific dates instead of their accomplishments in that position. But, if 10 people are being evaluated for the same job and essentially everyone has the same education level, with a similar job background, the man or woman, who enjoyed success in the last job or several jobs, will be the one who is hired every time.

In fact, as you're talking with former employers and suppliers, it's a good idea to even suggest to them what they might say about you in a letter of recommendation, which they can then send back to you.

One of the articles on my website, NowWhatJobs.net, has a discussion about the myth of the two-page resume. Many people think that two pages is too long, but that's really not accurate. A professional human resources consultant/coach walks you through how to put together your resume. So that's just one of many resources, which are available on my website right now.

Forgiveness is critical

The whole element of forgiveness is also critical in the process, as you go forward into the next chapter of your life. In other words, without forgiveness (which for a Christian is mandatory from the New Testament, but for others is simply a good idea) you simply wind up spinning your wheels.

To illustrate: A man goes into the same tavern every single night for the two months after he has lost his job. And the very same crowd of people at the bar every night has heard him tell the same sad (and tired) story, which you can appreciate after the 50th or 60th time of telling the same tale of woe, everyone around that man is getting sick and tired of hearing that story. So, now, people begin to move away from him. My challenge to the reader today is this: When are you going to give everyone a break and stop telling that same sad and tired story?

The next chapter might be your very best chapter

A layoff can be devastating, but so much of it has to do with your attitude and how you look at things going forward. It's possible that next chapter of your life might be the very best chapter that you have ever experienced in your life.

Unfortunately, we must sometimes go through that dark tunnel in our life, before we can get to the meadow on the other side, where the light begins to shine. Then, we will have walked into that beautiful valley, which is the entrance to the next chapter of our lives.



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Public Service Announcement – Your Users Group and You

Just like our beloved platform, your users group strives to stay ahead of the curve, and so we are contemplating implementing streaming video of your Meetings of Members. We all understand the pain of sometimes having to drive across town to either the LAC or the Sheraton, depending on which end of the city you are in and how sometimes you just cannot face the traffic, even when there are speakers you would truly enjoy seeing. This would allow you to see those presentations without risking a road rage incident on the 401 or spending your hard earned money on the 407. Let's face it, we're all very busy people and losing an additional hour or three sitting in traffic is just not the right answer.

To that end, a questionnaire will be posted on the TUG website in the near future to allow us to get your input and study the feasibility of bringing this level of interaction to the TUG membership.

Once it is online, you will receive an email asking you to please complete the questionnaire and allow us to determine if this is something that the members would like to see.

We are always interested in your feedback regarding other TUG issues as well, after all, it's YOUR users group and our efforts are geared toward ensuring it is meeting your expectations.

Kindest Regards;

Garth Tucker (for Your TUG BOD)

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