

President's Corner

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Trust your Gut! But Don't Let it Fool you...

The last few months have become somewhat brutal with all the employment changes happening out there. I personally have witnessed far too many in recent months. The pile of resumes from colleagues is far greater than the opportunities available. What's happening out there? Is it truly getting better? Is the turn around coming soon?

A lot of companies fail because their leaders have technical brilliance and all the insider industry contacts, but they lack enough experience in management and finance. These companies all rose to the top when the tech industry thrived, but weren't prepared for the turbulence. Technical Specialists are NOT economists. They don't really understand how bad things are until it's too late. That's why you should always ask yourself particularly during these slower times: "Where will I be six months from now?"

If you love your job and you love your company and you love your company's financial situation, that great! Assuming your love isn't blind all will be well. Otherwise, recessions become the time for changing your job voluntarily or involuntarily.

Suppose you're a top technical specialist in your field of expertise, but you would prefer to look for a better opportunity or organization to work for. A recession is a great time to make your move. Carefully, of course! Should you actually change jobs? That depends on how important job security is to you. Can you or your family stomach the risks associated with a move. Is the potential reward worth the

risk? Good organizations are re-tooling for tomorrow. They are all positioning for when this current slump ends. Do your research. If a competitor is hiring while your company is laying people off, following the status quo might be a dangerous mistake. You might find out that you're a big fish in a very polluted pond.

If you don't want to change employers, think about how you can be more valuable to your company six months from now than you are today. Add skills, enroll in some quality education and attend TEC. Volunteer for projects. Build relationships. Recessions are not the time to be a Prima Donna – or the pain in the butt at work. Keep looking six months ahead. As the economy begins to rebound, the extra skills can only further your chances for improvement.

Now suppose you're company is not doing well today. Maybe you still have a job, but are worried about being laid off. Besides trying to add skills, hunting for more security and networking like crazy, examine your finances. What steps can you take today to make a layoff a little less painful? It's easier to take those financial steps now than if you're unemployed. What if that dreaded phone call came to you from HR?

Make a graceful exit: If you have been given 2 weeks or longer to stick around, don't sabotage your reputation by being pitiful or even nasty. It's an awkward time for everyone.

Give yourself time to get over it! Losing a job can be brutal, but it will make you stronger. Trust me, I know. If

your job was an important part of your life, don't rush to land something else to quickly.

Stay in touch: Those who kept their jobs usually feel awkward about calling you, not knowing if you're still angry or resentful. Make the first move. Don't push for job leads, but let them know you want your relationship to continue. Too often we say, "I wonder whatever happened to ... ?" Don't become a stranger.

Wrong place, wrong time: Maybe you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Maybe the layoff is a message that you're in the wrong career. If you pay attention to the message, sometimes a layoff can be the best thing that ever happened to you.

When on the sidelines, show some ambition. Build one heck of a network. Create your own Web site. Take in some of those seminars you never had time for. Instead of spending 40 or 50 hours a week dragging yourself around the house, spend half that time learning. Most of all, keep your head up! Good people always land on their feet.

Make well-thought-out decisions during any recession, but never ignore your gut. Look at the signs when you are working or when on the sidelines, while planning your next move. It just might keep you personally from going belly up.

