

Turning a Layoff into Success

By James O. Armstrong

Baby boomers are probably disadvantaged by being older. While our society, in both the U.S. and Canada, is largely beyond the point of discrimination by race, gender, nationality or religious preference, for example, I do believe there is an age-based discrimination that has continued among some companies. I deplore this situation and consider it to be something that we will get beyond principally based on supply and demand factors in the future.

Typically, companies tend to focus on older employees from the standpoint of downsizing or rightsizing formulas. Oftentimes, the formula focuses on your age and years of service, which in effect is a double weighting on age. So, someone who is 52, 55 or 61 years old winds up being out of a job.

Professional HR departments in companies cannot admit publicly that by lowering their average age, they lower both their overall payroll and fringe benefit costs. In the United States, this factor especially relates to the total health care costs because as we get older, we tend to use doctors, hospitals, medical tests, prescriptions and dentists more frequently.

Begin to make plans today

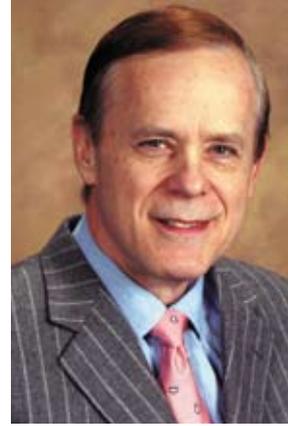
If you anticipate that there will be a reorganization in your company, you should begin to make plans today. Of course, one of those strategies for moving forward might involve going back to school to get more education or more training so that you can become more employable in the future.

If you are downsized, never give up

The first objective is this: "Don't give up!" You must stay in the game. So, interact with friends, neighbors, colleagues plus men and women at your church or civic organization, such as your local chamber of commerce. Don't be afraid to ask for some help in this process. The Bible puts it like this: "You have not because you ask not." So we do want to let people know. And as a professional sales and marketing executive most of my life, it has been stressed over and over again in seminars, where I have received training in my craft: "Ask for the business."

Fear can immobilize us. But the opposite of fear is taking action that's appropriate to the circumstance, which might include going back and getting more education or training. On the other hand, it certainly does involve networking with your friends, relatives, neighbors and people in your company or industry. You must begin to go forward—by developing your resume, making appropriate phone calls, networking, meeting with individuals in person, and simply asking men and women if they have jobs for someone with your unique background and skills.

You must hang in there and not give up. The highlight of former Prime Minister **Winston Churchill's** most famous speech goes like this: "Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense." (Source: October 29, 1941 address at Harrow School, located in Harrow on the Hill, England.)



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Finally, please remember that for every \$10,000 of income that you expect or anticipate in your next job, you should expect to invest one week to six weeks of effort. In other words, the higher your income has been in the past, the more time you can expect to put into this effort on a full-time basis in order to achieve your desired outcome, as you go forward. 

James O. Armstrong, President of *NowWhatJobs.net, Inc.*, (www.nowwhatjobs.net), also serves as the Editor of *NowWhatJobs.net*, the resource for job and career transitions for workers 40 years old and over, *Baby Boomers*, and *Active Seniors*. Read *NowWhatJobs.net* for skills training, relocation options, job opportunities and much more. In addition, James is the author of "Now What? Discovering Your New Life and Career After 50" and is the President of *James Armstrong & Associates, Inc.*, a media representation firm based in Suburban Chicago.



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