

Facing a Layoff?
SEVEN THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY
By Tim Batdorf

The economy is down. Deals fall through. Profits fall. Clients go out of business. And lawyers lose jobs. So, what can you do *now* to prepare yourself in the event of a layoff?

Create your “to-do” list. Facing a layoff can feel paralyzing. But being proactive and creating a list of action items will help motivate you and chart your course forward. Items on your to-do list might include updating your résumé and creating “job search” business cards.

Talk to your loved ones. Don’t avoid the obvious. Talk to your significant other, family, or close friends about your current situation. Keeping quiet (and trying to spare loved ones from distress) often backfires. Consider how you will talk to your children in an age-appropriate manner.

Maintain your network. Avoid isolation. Stay in touch with your network of friends and colleagues. They may be able to help you find a job or maintain a positive attitude. Your current employer may have ongoing projects for you. Don’t be too shy or embarrassed to ask for work.

Conduct due diligence. Be prepared to face issues that arise in layoff situations, including reviewing your severance package, maintaining health insurance coverage, rolling over your 401(k), and understanding the application process for unemployment benefits.

Manage your money. Track your expenses. Look for opportunities to save money. Common ways to save include cutting back on restaurant and meal expenses, reducing interest payments on credit cards, taking advantage of sales, reducing consumption of services, and/or comparing phone services and automobile insurance coverage. With a little research, you will find a ton of information about how you can live well on a “shoestring” budget.

Acknowledge your emotions. Times are tough. If you have not been laid off, you probably know someone who has. It is natural to feel a mixture of fear, resentment, and sadness in difficult times. Deal with your emotions in a healthy way. Avoid self-medicating with drugs and alcohol. Find good resources to move through this time. Perhaps you can get support from friends and family, or a minister, priest, rabbi, counselor, career coach, or a support group.

Assess your career. If you have been considering a career change, now may be the perfect time to explore your options. Consider the debt you will take on if you decide to go back to school.

By thinking ahead, you’ll be ready in the event of a major life change, and that will relieve significant stress. A little bit of planning goes a long way. Start developing your action plan today.

Tim Batdorf is a career coach and practicing lawyer. You can contact him through his Web site www.lawyerandself.com.