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BE YOU IN THE WORKPLACE

12 Steps to Take
If You've Been
Laid Off

BY JANE FRANKLAND

Tips & tricks

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'VE BEEN LAID OFF

The past couple of years has seen remote work leveling the playing field in terms of women in cybersecurity. Simply being able to work from home has made it easier for many companies to draw in a more diversified workforce, and boost their presence of women and minorities. But, just as companies made progress, the economic downturn is forcing many companies to lay off staff in droves. Just look at the tech layoff counter, <https://layoffs.fy>.

According to analysis of data by Revelio Labs, a company that analyses trends in the labour market, due to a bias against newer employees and a "last-in first out" system, recently-hired women and minorities, plus those in non-technical roles have been disproportionately impacted by layoffs, resulting in a disproportionate rate of job loss for these groups. It's a sad affair.

Considering this, I thought I'd create a Survival Kit, similar to what I did when the Covid-19 pandemic struck and I witnessed many of my entrepreneurial friends struggle to find clients and keep afloat. But as I wrote, and created this blog and assets, I realised much of the advice wasn't just for people who were being laid off. Rather it was sound advice for anyone wanting to future proof their job and thrive.

So if you've been laid off I hope this helps you. If you haven't been and you're reading this, please cherry pick your way through the steps. Finally make sure to access the assets I refer to - writing professional emails and if-then planning.

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IF THEN PLANNING

01 Don't panic - take a deep breath and assess the situation

When you suddenly lose your job and are having to endure a forced transition, it can be an overwhelming and disheartening experience. It's easy to get caught up in feelings of fear, uncertainty, doom, gloom, and let's not forget anger. Equally, to lose your confidence and feel thoroughly worthless and rejected. Please don't go down the fear path.

Instead, remember that with lay offs comes creation. You are working in an expanding field and despite recessions or technology advancements most people don't get replaced or laid off. The World Economic Forum consistently predicts that more jobs will be created than displaced. For example, in its "Future of Jobs Report 2020," they estimated that 85 million jobs will be displaced while 97 million new jobs will be created across 26 countries by 2025.

Dave Allen a cybersecurity board advisor, COO at Sundial Consulting, and former VP at Palo Alto Networks recommends,

"In the early stage it's worth reflecting on all the successes you've had to date and use that to help build your confidence and also how to tell your career story with pride and enthusiasm."

Cate M. Reich, PMP Reich, information security leader and Senior Technical Program Manager at Amazon agrees and says,

"Don't take your layoff personally. The key element is reminding yourself daily that sweeping layoffs have more to do with business restructuring than individual contributions and performance."

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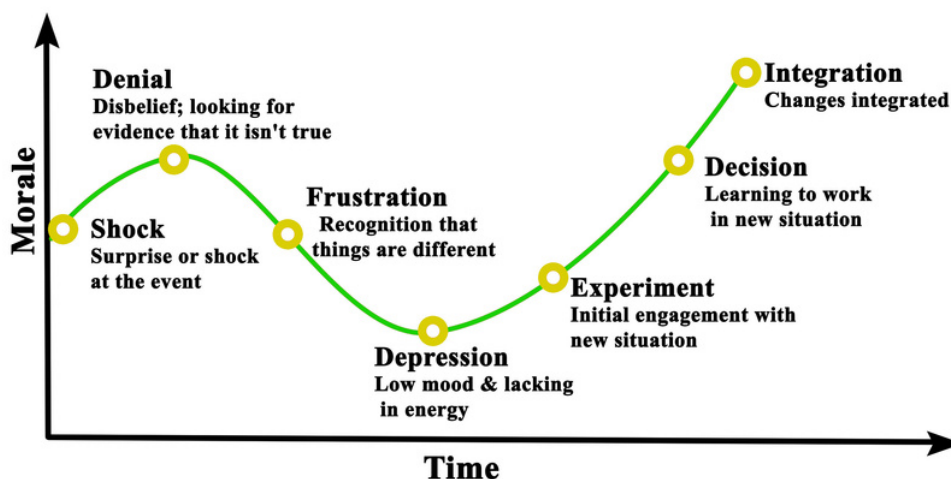
IF THEN PLANNING

She's absolutely right. As the economic recession continues to take its toll, many companies are feeling its effects in multiple ways. Layoffs have become commonplace at many tech businesses as their valuations decline. Companies are seeking solutions to help maintain profitability, but many are unable to keep their headcount up given the current market conditions. As a result, employees are being laid off.

So, take a deep breath, and logically assess the situation, believing all will work out well for you. See it. Feel it.

Understand Elizabeth Kubler Ross' Change Curve. While the Change Curve is primarily used to describe the stages of grief someone may experience after a traumatic event, it can also be used to understand any type of significant life change. The model can help people better comprehend and prepare for the changes (like layoffs) they are likely to face. Here's a diagram of it to help you see the process.

The Change Curve



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02 Make a plan and get resourceful

Plans are important because they provide a roadmap for how to achieve goals and objectives. By providing a detailed structure, plans can help you streamline activities, coordinate resources, and track progress. Plans also help you stay focused and motivated, as they provide clear steps to follow in order to reach the desired outcome. Additionally, plans can help prevent distractions or missed opportunities that could otherwise derail progress. They help you become more resourceful and are essential tools for successful completion of any project or task.

Cate M. Reich, PMP recommends thinking about your next role and being selective is an important early step as this window of time affords people the opportunity to examine what they liked / didn't like about their past roles and shape their next one.

Ersin Mehmet, a cybersecurity consultant recommends keeping your morning (work) routine and alarm on. He finds waking up early with no laying in bed helps, and says,

"I'm addicted to either jogging or walking to my local shop every morning. I try and time it so I catch the sunrise. I feel that getting natural sunlight in my eyes and the forward movement really helps my mood, stress and kicks any morning slowness out the door!"

Chris Holt from DCL Search agrees and recommends a specific routine.

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"Set yourself a daily plan so you have a structure, know what your aims and goals are for the day and celebrate the small wins. i.e.

9-10 am- Follow up on the days previous applications. (calls, emails, linkedin messages etc)

10-11 am- Apply to fresh roles

11-12 am- Call you network / recruiters / references

13-14:00- Post online, blog etc

Keep it to an hour sprint for each activity. (saves burning out). Get up and outside away from the monitor. Keep a list of who you have applied to and when. Record how you followed up and when. "

03 Use positivity and mantras

Positivity has many psychological and biological benefits, from releasing hormones such as oxytocin to reducing stress. It can also lead to improved job performance by providing more motivation and focus. Additionally, positive thinking helps develop problem-solving skills that can be applied to difficult situations. Ultimately, positivity works because it boosts overall wellbeing, leading to greater success in life and work.

I'm a big believer in mantras. Mantras are powerful affirmations or phrases used to encourage positive thinking and behaviour. They can help bring clarity to challenging situations, instill faith and hope, and create an overall sense of motivation and empowerment. Mantras can also act as a source of strength when faced with adversity, enabling a listener to stay focused on achieving their goals while maintaining perspective and a positive attitude. By repeating meaningful mantras regularly, you can begin to cultivate a more optimistic outlook on life.

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Here are the top 4 that help me during challenging times:

- *"Out of adversity comes opportunity."*
- *"Something better is on its way!"*
- *"God has my back."*
- *"Rejection is protection."*

And if you need some longer ones...

"All is well, I am safe, I am calm, I have enough time and money for all that I need, I am blessed, I am wanted, People love to work with me and pay me well, I am saying yes to my soul, I am living the abundant life of my dreams every day."

"I am deserving of all God's blessings, My identity is not limited to my experiences of the past or expectations for the future, I can be a source of positivity, radiating love and kindness everywhere I go, I will nurture a spirit of understanding by appreciating the light within myself and others, allowing us to mutually reflect each other's gifts, My abilities will no longer be hidden - I choose to recognise my strengths and honour my uniqueness."

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04 Get yourself an accountability partner, or system, and lean in

Few people think about accountability when they've been laid off, but having an accountability partner or a system to support you can make all the difference.

Accountability partners/ buddies are important because they help to hold you accountable for your goals and commitments. By having someone responsible for checking in with you regularly, you can stay on track and motivated. Accountability partners also provide support and encouragement during difficult times, which can lead to improved productivity and self-confidence. Additionally, having a sense of accountability can help you improve your problem-solving skills and foster personal growth.

An effective **accountability system**, like my IN Focus Journal and Planner, (which is available on Amazon or via me for digital and bulk orders) can also help. By creating a system of expectations and rewards, you'll be more likely to stay on track with your goals. Accountability systems also provide structure and discipline for tasks that require a lot of motivation or self-discipline.

Furthermore, by establishing milestones and deadlines, you can avoid slipping into procrastination or letting important matters slide. A good accountability system helps you stay motivated and organised in order to achieve your desired result.

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05 Update your resume, LinkedIn profile and write your story

Updating your resume and LinkedIn profile (key assets) are important steps. A good resume and LinkedIn profile not only communicates your accomplishments and job experience, but they should show future employers that you're competent, reliable and up-to-date with modern trends.

Many people believe in the value of a good story. Cate Reich says,

"Resumes can be a list of your activities OR they can tell your story. What makes YOU unique, valuable, different - this is a great place to detail soft skills which are probably more critical than hard skills for longevity, collaboration, and career growth. You also can have different lenses of your story - depending on what's in your cross hairs! "

Making sure all of your information is accurate and that your resume contains keywords that are associated with the job you seek, and is ATS-friendly is vital as this enables recruiters, Talent Acquisition and potential hiring managers to quickly process your application and contact you for an interview.

These ATS-friendly resume scanners have free options:

- <https://www.topresume.com/>
- <https://www.jobscan.co/>
- <https://resumeworded.com/>

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06 Network, network, network

The importance of networking cannot be emphasised enough. Not only is it a good source of support and can help you bypass HR and other filters, but according to HubSpot, 85% of jobs are filled through networking and according to CNBC, 70% of jobs are never published publicly!

When it comes to leveraging your network, weak-ties offer your best return on investment. As I wrote in my book, *IN Security*, weak ties are typically associated with finding jobs and the work of the sociologist Mark Granovetter. Until his research, most people believed that jobs were found through strong ties – personal connections with friends, family, or peers at work.

However, what Mark discovered was that the primary source of job leads came from weak ties – distant acquaintances, or friends of a friend. It turns out that people rarely refer their close connections for jobs because they're either worried that it will reflect badly on them if it doesn't work out, or because they're more likely to know of their close connections' faults and weaknesses, which they believe could interfere with being a good employee.

Now you know this, reach out to your weak-ties first and then others who you have closer relationships: peers, former managers/ directors, family members, friends. Ask them about potential job leads, freelance or fractional opportunities. Create a spreadsheet so you can keep track.

Follow up with them if they don't reply promptly. Why? Because people are busier than ever. People get distracted and often think they've replied

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when they haven't. Email is also not as reliable as it once was. Due to spam filters and other reasons sometimes it can end up in a person's junk file.

If you're not sure how to ask for help whether it's for your job search or not, download my latest guide: *The Networking Expert's Guide to Writing Professional Emails*. I've written you 13 scripts that you can copy, paste and revise for all sorts of situations including being laid off, asking for help job searching, introducing yourself, asking for a mentor etc.

07 Use social media

I've already mentioned updating your profile on LinkedIn but utilising platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and even Facebook and Instagram (yes even for cybersecurity) really will open up more new doors for discovering job opportunities than anything else. They allow you to create a virtual network of connections which increases visibility among potential employers who are regularly posting and advertising about openings.

According to Novoresume, 84% of organizations use social media to recruit their employees, 73% of young adults claimed they found a job through a social media website, at least 67% of recruiters leaned on LinkedIn research for hiring employees and every 7 seconds someone gets hired through LinkedIn.

Searching for jobs on LinkedIn is straightforward. All you need to do is search for a job using the search field on top of the LinkedIn homepage,

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or just access the Jobs page directly where you can search and apply for job LinkedIn provides more informaton so do a search.

If you're short on time, you can use other tools, for example LoopCV. I've not tried it but according to their site you just upload your CV and specify your job preferences. From there, you create one or more job searches (Loops), and let LoopCV take care of the rest. The platform will search for matches, alert you when opportunities arise, and even apply on your behalf.

08 Reach out to recruitment agencies

You want to exploit all avenues so whilst you're waiting for your LinkedIn connections to come back to you, contact good recruiters. Chris Holt, Talent Solutions Lead at DCL Search (in the UK) says,

"An experienced, reputable and credible recruiters role is to build strategic relationships with hiring authorities within key and or desirable organisations with the view of making key and strategic hires that meet their recruitment needs.

Once qualified, they should be streamlining the process to minimise the time it takes for you to be introduced, interviewed and ultimately hired compared to that of a direct application against the rest of the talent pool."

If you're not sure how to pick a good one, research the market, look at Google reviews, Glassdoor, LinkedIn recommendations and for mutual connections. Then call the recruitment agency, and speak to a recruiter to get a feel for them.

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You want to ascertain:

- Does the recruiter have experience hiring in cybersecurity?
- Is the recruiter listening to you and really taking the time to understand your situation, and what you want.
- How will they promote you. You don't want a recruiter who mass mails your resume around.

Finally, before you send them your resume, limit your personal identifiable information. For example, don't include your date of birth, your security clearance level and a full address. Use a separate email address, too.

09 Consider freelance, consulting, fractional work or even starting your own business!

While the feeling of being laid off can be disheartening, never forget it's also a great opportunity to explore other career paths like freelance, consulting or fractional work. With flexible hours and the ability to work remotely, freelancing and consulting present unique advantages to taking a traditional job.

Fractional work differs from contracting in the sense that a fractional worker is usually not working on a single project for any particular employer, but instead works for multiple employers at once and across different projects. Whereas contractors typically provide services or complete specific one-time projects, fractional workers are often available to assist an employer's team with ongoing tasks or long-term projects.

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Additionally, contractors tend to be primarily responsible for their own work, whereas fractional workers tend to have more of a collaborative relationship with their employers, helping out as needed over time.

Starting your own business might feel too much for you just after being laid off. However, with the right planning and preparation, it can be a rewarding opportunity to gain financial freedom and make your dreams come true. Taking the plunge into entrepreneurship requires determination, perseverance and risk management, but there are numerous resources available to aid in the process. Many of my clients have taken coaching with me to get them off the ground or scaling. With dedication to your craft and plenty of hard work, there's no limits to what you can achieve as your own boss.

10 Practice interviewing

Once you start receiving calls from potential employers, take some time to practice answering common interview questions so that you feel more confident during the actual interviews themselves. Consider role playing with someone (perhaps your accountability partner) in order to simulate a real-life interview scenario; this way, if any unexpected questions come up during the real deal, you won't feel flustered or unprepared! Also, prepare questions you want to ask your future employer. An interview should be a two-way process and you want to ensure you are aligned and that this company can meet your career needs.

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11 Check out government assistance programs

If you've recently been laid off, you may be eligible for certain government assistance programs or unemployment benefits. There's no shame in claiming. Taking the time to research and review available programs / benefits is a practical way to help you get back on track financially and access resources and services to assist in your job search. Many initiatives provide financial support, career counseling, retraining programs, housing assistance, and other helpful services.

12 Take care of yourself

Lastly (and importantly), don't forget to take care of yourself mentally and physically throughout this process! Make sure to get enough sleep each night, practice mindful breathing techniques throughout the day, and treat yourself kindly by taking breaks when needed instead of pushing yourself too hard during this difficult transition period in your life.

To end...

No one ever expects to get laid off, but it happens. If you find yourself in this situation, the most important thing to do is to remain calm and assess your options. From updating your resume to freelance work or government assistance programs/ benefits, there are a variety of ways to weather this storm. Update your professional profiles, reach out to your network, and keep learning and growing throughout this process. Most importantly, stay positive—a better opportunity is just around the corner.

Good luck out there!

You've
got this!