

OPPORTUNITY...

The worst thing you can do if you are laid off is sit around doing nothing. While it is important to be looking for employment, applying to jobs and networking, you can only do that so many hours a day. If you do nothing but apply for jobs while you are unemployed, this leaves a gap in your resume. Employers understand that layoffs happen, especially during this current pandemic. That being said, employers want to see that you used this time of unemployment productively. Here are some things that you can do while laid off, many of which you can include on your resume, reference in a cover letter and speak to in an interview. So after updating your resume, your cover letter and your LinkedIn profile, give these recommendations a try.

1. Volunteer—there are so many ways to volunteer and many organizations are in desperate need during this pandemic. Think about what interests you, think about where your skills could help the most, think about your community. Volunteer work can be included on your resume with the dates (month/year) that you are involved in the volunteer work. You can also expound on the volunteer work and how you think that relates to one or more key words/skills for the job you are applying to in a cover letter and interview. Once you get a new job though, I would remove the volunteer work from your resume and cover letter.
 - a. Look at your skill set to see if you can use those skills to help a non-profit. Are you're a computer programmer? Maybe you can help a non-profit set up their website. Are you in construction? Maybe you can help Habitat For Humanity or a similar organization in your area.
 - b. Consider volunteering in your local soup kitchen, or food pantry. Do you have a marketing or sales background? See if you can assist the soup kitchen or food pantry by soliciting donations from businesses in the area. Are you a good cook? Maybe you can come up with some nutritious, easy to make meal recipes using common staples found at the soup kitchen or food pantry. You can share those recipes with the people who are visiting the soup kitchen or food pantry and maybe even do some cooking demonstrations.
 - c. Do you like people and have a car? Maybe you can volunteer for Meals on Wheels in your area. Meals on Wheels delivers hundreds of thousands of meals each day to the elderly and home bound. You could bring a smile to someone's face, bring a meal that may be someone's only meal of the day, have a conversation with someone who has no one to speak to, be the person that says "I care".
 - d. Are you a good writer? Many nursing home residents have been cut off from their families for months. They are feeling lonely and scared. Consider a letter writing campaign for people living in nursing homes. You can share stories about yourself, your family, your dog, whatever you feel like. If you are not sure how to start, there are a few organizations you can contact such as Letters of Love—Love For Our Elders (<https://loveforoureliders.org/letters>). If you are not sure what to write, the Girl Scouts have a handout with great tips (https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/at_home/service-projects/Letter%20Writing%20Tips%20for%20Girls.pdf)
 - e. Give blood or plasma. The American Red Cross and local blood banks are in desperate need of blood and plasma. The American Red Cross and many local blood banks are testing all plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies and plasma donations that contain COVID-19 antibodies may be able help the most critical patients actively fighting this virus. Blood and platelet donations are needed for pediatric cancer patient and accident victims. Donations don't take that long and you could be savings someone's life.
2. Consider part-time work. Part-time work can keep you busy, keep you animated and keep you connected.
3. Join networking groups specific to your industry or geographic area. In today's job market, it is not only what you know, but who you know.

4. Take a class or get certified in something that could help you in your career—
 - a. Many universities have free courses. You don't have to be a student of the university and you don't receive course credits, but you can include course taken on your resume and/or cover letter to show that you are using the time you are laid off to learn something new. You can access many colleges directly or you can go to EdX (<https://www.edx.org/search>) to see all of the free courses (3000 of them) offered by colleges like MIT, Harvard, Berkley and many others. These courses are free and you can earn a certificate upon complete for a small fee. Course subjects include areas such as: Business Management, Communications, Computer Science, Data Analysis and Statistics, Economics and Finance, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Law, Math, Medicine, Science and Social Sciences.
 - b. Udemy (<https://digitaldefynd.com/free-Udemy-courses/?wsfreecourses>) offers free courses in Personal Development, Web Development, Digital Marketing, Business and Finance, Excel, Health, Python, Data Sciences & AI, Sales, Photography, Photoshop, Writing, Cooking, Music and Language. All courses are free and most courses offer certification for a small fee.
 - c. Alison (<https://alison.com/certificate-courses>) offers over 2,000 certificate course and with Alison, the course and the certification are free. They offer course in IT, Math, Humanities, Language, Business, Health, Marketing, Science and Lifestyle.
 - d. Code Academy (<https://www.codecademy.com/>) let's you learn computer coding for free. You can purchase the Pro program for \$39.99 a month which provides you with members only content, peer support, real-world projects, step-by-step guidance and certificates of completion. There are courses in Web Development, Data Science, Computer Science, Developer Tools, Machine Learning, Code Foundations, Web Design, Game Development, Mobile Development and Data Visualization.
 - e. Check out your local community college. Most community colleges offer free or low cost programs with could be related to Excel training, photography, etc. You get to learn something new, meet new people and account for your time while unemployed.

Going through a layoff can be difficult and disconcerting. If you need any assistance with resume writing, interview preparation or career counseling. Resume-Interview Success, LLC. can help. Our professional resume services help put your resume at the top of the stack, in front of your prospective employer. We take our services a step further by offering multiple levels of interview skills training, job search recommendations and career website advice.

With our extensive experience in resume writing and interview preparation and having conducted thousands of corporate interviews, we bring a unique perspective to your job hunt. We know what recruiters are looking for and we can help you get noticed and make a great impression.

We believe that in order to provide our clients with the best service, we need to get to know them and understand their skills, concerns, strengths and weaknesses. We build lasting relationships with our clients.

Our interaction does not end with the presentation of a revised resume or the completion of interview training or the final career counseling discussion. We continue to follow-up with our clients to see how they are doing in the job search and we will make resume and/or cover letter adjustments if needed. We will discuss how their interviews have been going and if there are any "pain points" that we need to address.

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