

## If I Lost My Job Today -- A List of the Exact Steps I Would Take

If I lost my job today the first thing I would do is go out and get a good workout, grab an amazing meal, and maybe catch a movie if there's anything good playing. My initial instinct would be to have a planning session and immediately get to work on applying for my next position.

But turns out that instinct is a bit off. I know better, and you should to.

The biggest issue with being unemployed is maintaining your mental fortitude. Viktor Frankl compares being unemployed with life in a POW camp. As he describes, the worst part is not so much the torture or physical pain inflicted but rather the torture of not knowing when it will all end. When you are looking for a job, the biggest issue really is the day-to-day uncertainty.

"When will I start working again?"

"How am I supposed to sound qualified for this job?"

"What can I do to be competitive if I don't want to fake it?"

In hindsight, all of these things point to one thing: momentum. So, if I lost my job today my number one mission would be to **continue and/or increase my current momentum**.

I believe this is a major reason why employers prefer candidates that are currently working. Candidates with current jobs are, allegedly, sharp and at the ready. They may require less time to get up to speed, and won't have to play catch up.

What I would do is mimic this. My goal would be to shape my life in a fashion that demonstrates that I never stopped working, I never slowed down. This is how you can look competitive no matter what job you're applying for.

That's such a big deal but also a big topic so I may cover it later. But for today I want to provide a list of the exact things I would do if I lost my job today. These are not necessarily in order. Also, the italicized items represent the things I didn't do in the past that I absolutely would do now and in the future.

If you follow this list, I can promise that you will have a set of activities that will help you maintain and increase your momentum over time. This list will also give you a daily plan of action.

You can do what everyone else does and just send resumes. But you've done that. And you don't even know if it's working. What you do know is.....that you don't know what else to do.

Leave it all up to chance and you'll get a job eventually. Take action now and not only will you have more clarity about your future employment, but you will also start that job with a huge advantage. You'll walk in with a clear idea of what it means to be an industry rockstar!

Remember, it's about momentum. There will be good days and bad. There will be slow days and fast. As Albert Einstein said,

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

Here we go!

Starting context: First thing's first. Write down what industry and what job titles I am going after. If you notice from that last sentence, job titles is plural. I'd be willing to pursue multiple job titles within a single industry. Opinions about having multiple resumes are abound but I generally stick to the rule of thumb that any recent industry experience is fare game. If I've held a job in that industry during the last 10 years then I will feel competent and competitive within it. You may have multiple entries. Just go with a single set of choices for now. I will refer to these as your "industry" and your "job title".

1. Check my finances. How long before my risk profile changes? How long before I begin to fear running out of money? Get close to running out of money? Actually run out?
2. Get a job. I teach music part time, so I'd spend time upping the number of lessons. But if I didn't teach music, I'd hit the mall, craigslist, Uber, InstaCart, anything and everything I can find to make sure some money is coming in.
3. *Download or create a few weekly follow-up charts. I'd do this in Google Sheets (along with most of my work) because I can access this anywhere if I have Wi-Fi. This specific file would have multiple charts under different tabs. The tabs would be for people I meet, companies I contact, job boards.*
4. Create another sheet as my daily schedule. I'd carve out about 5 to 8 hours for office work, 2 to 4 hours for reading, and at least 1 hour for fitness.
5. Create my resume.
6. Make a list of job boards. I would add my resume to each job board and then enter the date in my follow up chart. Each week on a different day I will update my resume and repost it to the job boards
7. *Make a list of social groups. These are groups having to do with the job title or industry I've chosen. But I would make sure to include one or two that are random and just there for fun. I would attend at least 2 social events every week. Four a week is better.*
8. *Create a list of 20 industry insiders that would make great mentors and a plan to reach out to them.*
9. *Make a list of all the cities and towns right around me. This will be used to research some of the best companies in these cities and towns ("Best Of..." Awardees). The best companies often win awards. Award winning companies tend to win awards because they have been successful at winning more business. If they're winning more business, they'll need more hands on deck to complete the new work that will be coming through the door. In other words, the best companies will be hiring.*
10. *Copy and paste all the major [companies that call my area home](#) in a separate spreadsheet. These will be filtered based on my industry for use later.*
11. *Create a list of industry trade groups, agencies, governing bodies, and associations.*
12. *Create a list of tools and technologies specific to my industry and job title. Softwares, deliverables, tools, technologies, resources, guidance documents, and certifications (the more recent, the better).*
13. *Create a list of industry and job title forums, blogs, news sites, books, facebook groups, and websites.*
14. *Create a list of industry and job title events, symposiums, conferences, and webinars.*
15. *Create a list of key job positions and gatekeepers: Recruiters, Project Managers, Directors, Vice Presidents, HR managers, etc.*
16. *Create a list of online business sites related to my field. This is where I'll learn about new executive hires (e.g - "New Vice President of Healthcare IT chosen at ABC company" -*

- A headline like this gives me the name of an individual as well as a company to research.)

17. Create a list of news outlets, volunteer organizations, and anyone else that may be looking for people to contribute writing and specific deliverables.
18. Clean up my facebook and linkedin pages. Update (or start) my personal website and blog.
19. Begin creating my elevator speech. I will have one about what I do and what I'm looking for and another one specifically asking people if they know of individuals in their network that I may speak with.
20. Create a list of temp and staffing agencies (mostly to help me maintain my interview skills and as a way to grab industry news and insight).

Completing all these objectives and lists would not happen in one day. However, my goal would be to START them all within the first day. This way I can create a schedule of exactly what I will be doing each day. These can and will be discussed later. Many of them will require continuous research and identification work.

Now, if I was someone else and I was looking at this list I would probably think, "Wow, that's a lot of work!" And it might be...but that's the point. Because if there is one thing I know now that I wish I had known back in the day, it's this:

**The extra things that you do to stand out from other job candidates when searching for the job should be the same things you do to stand out once you get the job. You don't need to wait until you get the job to start working. Ultimately, you want to be one of the top individuals in your field. Maintain your momentum towards that goal and you won't go wrong.**

Remember, it's about constant and increasing momentum. My goal every day is to work towards being better than I was the day before. Keep moving forward, keep improving, and keep leading. I would definitely spend that first day relaxing and having fun...because I know that the following morning it's back to work.

Let me know what you think of this list. What doesn't make sense or still confuses you? What are you still worried about? What's missing? Contact me with questions or comments.