

# **The Worried Working**

## **Tips for Staying Secure in Your Job Today and Down the Road**

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When things go well many become complacent -- forgetting how things can change on a dime. Think of the early decade, the boom on Wall Street and the dot.coms. Yet it didn't last and layoffs became the norm. Today, we continue to see layoffs with many who are employed worried they're next.

In hindsight we realize boom times are invitations to plan ahead, save money, make purchases we might otherwise delay like a new car or computer. Successful professionals know this. They know careful planning improves their careers. Here's what they advise to secure your job now and down the road.

**1. Do your homework.** This means not slacking off on the job you have now, not taking it for granted. It means paying attention to what is going on in your company and in your field, knowing your strengths, and your value to the organization so that you're ready for a change, a promotion and if needed a career transition.

**2. Set goals and review them periodically.** Having annual goals is another strategy to help you prepare for transitions and stay on track. Your goals should include any and all any of the following suggestions.

- **Join professional associations and participate.** Membership will provide you with the latest information on your field and opportunities to retool, as well as a support network of colleagues. Many members volunteer for leadership positions, which provide the opportunity to develop new skills and gain visibility.
- **Keep up with technology.** Upgrade your personal computer, software and cell phone. In downtimes, you'll be glad you did. Also, check the pictures/messages on your Facebook, as well as your voice mail. Make sure they reflect professionalism so you'd be proud to have your employer or prospective employers review them.
- **Continue your education.** Technology changes rapidly and so do professional fields. Make sure you are up to date, earning any necessary certifications. Also, update your resume and create a brag file of your accomplishments. This is important for your annual review and, will prepare you for future opportunities.
- **Develop communication and negotiation skills.** If the downsizing happens, you'll need both skills to land a new position or become re-hired by your company.
- **Nurture your relationships and networks.** It's important to recognize that networking isn't about getting a job it's being successful on the job, by having colleagues to call for advice/support. Today, it's easy to stay in touch online and via text. Don't be one of those who only shows-up in hard times. The people we remember are those who are there through thick and thin, very important when you realize 26% of the people hired, land their job through internal referrals.

**3. Take advantage of employer sponsored career/outplacement services.** If downsizing happens, sign up for these services, which typically offer a career coach to guide you. By doing your homework, and utilizing career services, you may find you have an edge on your competition with more than one offer awaiting you!