



How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times

Module 1 of the Bold DNA Series



A Guide for Senior Professionals

During 2001 and the months following 9/11, upwardly mobile executives, managers and other senior professionals found their careers stalling or even going backwards. Many people had to change their career focus, and settle for less senior or exciting jobs and of course, work was scarce.

Where before the resumes of these senior professionals had shown strong revenue growth, profitable operations and new market development, the new reality was much grimmer.

Just like fossil records, the resumes I see today bear those scars. While the circumstances are different, we are experiencing something similar in the fall of 2008.

This first Module of the Bold DNA Series is a call to arms for anyone interested in developing their career in and out of good times and bad. While you can never be entirely immune to the impact of difficult economic times, there are things you can and should do to protect your career.

In this report, I will show you 4 career management traps to avoid in uncertain economic times. I will also give you strategies to employ that can increase the chances your career will survive this storm, and perhaps even thrive.

And by the way, this is not just about this storm. There will be other storms, and what you have done in the past, what you do today, and continue to do in the future will impact your ability to weather the big waves and winds of economic cycles.

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This report also includes a way to size up the state of your career. We will take a page from the business-school playbook and run a SWOT analysis. SWOT, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, is a simple yet powerful model MBA students and managers use to analyze the strategic positions of companies, products or business situations. But you don't need to be an MBA to apply the SWOT technique to your own career planning.

Here is what we will cover in this report:

- ▶ Get clear on the idea of career management
- ▶ Understand 4 common career traps during scary times
- ▶ Learn strategies to minimize risk during times of economic uncertainty
- ▶ Explore how to expand your pool of opportunities
- ▶ And 8 ways to respond effectively if a layoff does occur
- ▶ Understand how to conduct a deep, personal analysis of your position using an MBA-type strategy model
- ▶ AND get access to special offer on Page 20, only available to readers of this report.

What is Career Management?

First, a brief stop to make sure we are on the same page.

What does it mean to be proactive in managing your career?

The first and most important rule (**everything else is a sub-set of this**), is to actually **MANAGE** your career. Be proactive. Do something about it. It is not just what you know, but actually taking action.

That means making actual decisions about your career and actually applying what you know. And that is the tough part, isn't it.

The chances are that you don't pay enough attention to the care and feeding and growth of your network. You know this. However, knowing doesn't get it done. It is the application of the knowledge that is the hard part.

"There is a time when panic is the appropriate response."

- Eugene Kleiner

That is why I decided to show you this quote for the famous venture capitalist. There is only so much you can do the night before the big test if you haven't done the readings, attended the lectures or submitted the assignments. It would be your fault, right? Yes it would. If you have done **nothing** to manage your

career over these last months and years, then yes, I think a bit of panic is in order. Not the kind of panic that paralyzes you. But a little bit of healthy panic.

This is why I, and any other person who works in this field, keep preaching the same gospel. When times are good and work a plenty, managing your career in a bold, proactive sense can seem like one of those Quadrant 2 activities that we can live without.

But you can't. Not really. Not if you want to confidently plan for your future. Not if you want to avoid the worst of the storms. Not if you want to sleep really well at night and actually even enjoy your days of work.

It isn't optional. Not at all.

Into Quadrant 1

Am I laying it on a bit thick? Maybe just a **little**. But mostly not. If Quadrant 2 is Important, but Not Urgent, I think we have moved into the zone of Important and Urgent given the state of the economy right now. It might not have been urgent last year or the year before that, but it certainly is urgent now.

So, let's keep going.

Your Goals

Let's start with goals. What is the point of proactively managing your career? What should your goals be through this period of instability, or in fact, any period of difficulty?

Difficult times bring new imperatives and maybe new definitions of success. I recommend that the following 3 goals should be front and centre.

1. Minimize Risk

2. Enhance Options

3. Keep moving forward

1. The first goal is to minimize your risk. That might mean decreasing the likelihood that you will be involuntarily dismissed or put out of work. It means protecting your income. It might mean dismissal, but on your own terms (i.e. with a healthy severance package).

The point is that while you have very little impact if any on the overall macro-economic picture, you can do something to manage and mitigate your personal risk.

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)

2. The second goal is one that should apply at any time in your career. And yet, so many ignore it. Proactive career management generates **choice** and **options**. You want those. You may choose to stay where you are, but having options makes it a stronger decision. And when things aren't working well for you, then the ability to explore your options is vital to a sense of well being, career performance and development.

In scary economic times, generating options and choice is even more important, but in my experience tends to be dismissed as irrelevant. It sounds frivolous, or too ambitious when everything is going down the tube.

Sorry, but that is wrong.

3. The third goal is to keep moving forward. We only have so many productive years to play with. And it is a shame when a few of them get wasted. Agreed, you might have to re-frame how you define what "moving forward" means for the next year. But you can move forward, right?

- ▶ You can still develop and enhance your brand in your marketplace
- ▶ You can continue to build a vibrant and strong and powerful network, one that will serve you for decades to come
- ▶ You can still find a way to chalk up wins, of some form
- ▶ You can enhance skill sets. Get trained. Build your portfolio.
- ▶ And you can still land an amazing role or client

Things haven't stopped. It is just how you respond that is the key.

Core Themes

Hidden in those three goals are some core themes or values that might resonate with you and give this work some motivation for you.

Control: Personally, I need a sense of control. Over my destiny. Over how I invest my time and energy. I think we all sleep better when we have some sense of control over how our life and career unfolds.

Choice: I know it sounds obvious, but why is it that so few people manage their careers in ways that provide them with a steady pipeline of choices. And yet being trapped and stuck are common complaints. Choice is freedom. Choice is protection from making decisions. Operating from scarcity simply isn't fun. Or empowering. In fact, it is risky. Let's help you generate choice.

Individuality: I am assuming and hoping that thousands, if not tens of thousands of people will read this report. But I am speaking to you dear reader. Who are you? What do you do really well and enjoy doing? What environments do you work best in? This is not a report on herd mentality. In fact, because you are reading this, I am making the big assumption that you aren't content to be part of the herd. Good.

The 4 Traps

In my years working as first an executive search consultant and since 2002, as the founder and head career strategist of Bold Career, I have witnessed the career trajectories of thousands of executives, senior professionals, managers and business owners. There is of course, infinite diversity. But also amazing similarities. And in fact natural laws in how the market works.

What follows are the four key traps I have observed specific to difficult economic times.

1. Turtling, like jealousy, has the opposite effect than desired

The natural response in difficult economic times is to put your head down. If you stay quiet, hope for the best, cross your fingers, so the thinking goes, you just might ride it out. Okay. It might work. Sometimes.

But this is the path of **zero control**. And it is your fault when the axe falls. Because you didn't prepare. Turtling is a *hope for the best* strategy. In fact, it isn't a strategy at all. Another word for turtling is hiding and hoping the monsters don't find you.

You need options. You need choice. And you need a way of deciphering when it is time to stay and when to go.

And here is the kicker: When you hide in your organization, you are just as likely to put yourself in jeopardy as you are to avoid it. In the act of keeping your head down, you might find yourself not adding as much value as you could or should.

2. Frying Pan into the Fire

Oddly, the second most natural response to uncertain or scary times is for people to jump ship and grab the first life buoy that comes along. At the first sign of danger they sign-on to something else, anything that gives them the income they need. And it is fraught with danger. Granted, you may get lucky. The new job

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may be a great one. But the basic laws of career decision making still apply.

The act of saying yes to a new work opportunity is an incredibly important one when you consider that like a tattoo, that new job will stick with your resume for the rest of your career. Not to mention fit with colleagues and culture, the guarding of your good name, actual job fit, income security and overall career progression.

And of course, when you make a rushed decision you increase your overall career risk because the probabilities of the new job working out have fallen rapidly because you didn't do your due diligence. And then worst case, you find yourself laid-off or desperately looking for a job 3 months after you quit your old one. And forever on, you have some explaining to do about your short stint at that organization.

There are lot of factors that usually are not considered in the act of jumping ship. Yes, sometimes speed is essential. But do it carefully.

3. Commodities Lose

In an earlier part of my career, I was an executive search consultant in a high-end firm. During economic downturns, business did go down, but it also changed. Our search assignments turned into highly specialized wish lists for experienced, knowledgeable, skilled and networked candidates. Candidates with distinctive track records who had the package the hiring organization required to move them through the storm into calm waters.

In other words, companies were still hiring. They just wanted more specific pedigrees. They wanted people who could pull them out of a slowdown, or turn them around, or enter the company into an expanding market. They wanted to hire people who had a proven track record of getting the result they wanted.

If you present yourself as a commodity. One of many. Same as your peers. You have a huge problem. In any given competition for a promotion, for assignment to a special project, or for a new job, you need to present yourself in a way that fits their bill. Their wish list. Their needs. You can't do that as a commodity.

You need to be a differentiated product / service / person in the marketplace. (Which by the way, means that you don't fit everywhere.)

Trap 3b - Going Wide: I promised 4 traps, but I am going to over deliver and add some extra value here. What doesn't work particularly well at any time, but even more so during scary times is going wide with your job search activities. Going wide is the shotgun approach. You apply everywhere and to anything thinking that being selective and strategic won't give you enough opportunities.

It doesn't work.

Consider your competition. If the company can hire to their spec, and you are only vaguely qualified, why would they hire you?

It takes courage to go narrow. But it is the path of higher probabilities.

I am not a gambler, but I imagine that someone who has some skill and who is intent on making some money would go to Vegas and focus on one or two types of games. The ones they understand and are good at. The games they feel have the best probabilities of paying out, for them.

Which tables are you going to play?

4. The Tighter You Hang On, The Greater the Probability of Getting let go

I know this is counterintuitive, but if you are approaching your job or your clients from a place of fear and desperation, it probably means that what is being received by your coworkers / boss, or clients isn't conducive to the management of a strong, secure and vibrant career. Looking for pennies here and there, tightening the terms of contracts, scraping for cash, holding on to projects and guarding your little empire all contribute negatively towards your security.

Hanging on means behaving in ways that demonstrate to other people that your sole concern is your own security and not the good of the team, organization or customers.

It doesn't matter to anyone but you and your family that you can't pay the mortgage. Or that your stock portfolio is down 45% and you need more cash to catch-up. No one cares.

In fact, the normal human reaction to desperation and fear and neediness is to be repulsed.

The absolute last thing you want to do is to communicate or project these emotions onto anyone remotely connected with your

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)



“The golden opportunity you are seeking is in yourself. It is not in your environment; it is not in luck or chance, or the help of others; it is in yourself alone.”

- Orison Swett Marden

career development. Not in interviews. Not in performance reviews. Not to your boss. Not in networking conversations.

Please understand what I am saying. It is okay to feel those emotions. I have experienced them myself. And it is absolutely fine to be motivated and focused. Just don't forget that you work around and with other people who are very likely feeling the same pinch.

Operate from confidence and strength and selectiveness. Continue to be a team player.

Bold Solutions & Opportunities

These are tough times as I write this for you. I am certain that these bad times will pass and I am equally certain they will come again. In many cases, no amount of proactive career management can prevent bad things happening like lay-offs and prolonged unemployment. However, truly managing your career allows you:

- ▶ To minimize and manage risk
- ▶ To uncover and take advantage of key opportunities
- ▶ And to respond effectively when the unavoidable occurs

So, what's your strategy for survival and growth? Here are some ideas. And remember, it is in the doing and application of these that you realize their power.

How to Minimize Risk

Strategy: Become Indispensable

Let's invest a moment in thinking about how essential you are to your employer and / or to your customers. For most managers, the process of selecting which employees to lay off was a difficult task. Perhaps you have had to perform that duty.

So, who gets picked for layoffs? This is not about non-performance or dismissal for cause. When the word comes down that head count has to be reduced by 1, 5, 20, 100 or 1000, who goes on the list and who doesn't? How did you pick?

Sometimes it is the most expensive employees. Often, cuts come from “non-essential” departments or departments where it is believed that head count can be reduced without an impact on getting product shipped or product sold. But at an individual level, who goes and who stays? Can you impact this decision? I think you can. Here's how:

Be part of the solution: Your manager has problems. The organization you work for has problems. So do your colleagues and the team that reports to you.

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)

Homework

Q. How indispensable are you? To your manager? To your team? To the organization?

Q. Who thinks that besides you?

Find problems that you can solve and add as much value as you can. Notice that this is the exact opposite of traps #1 and #4. You are embracing the fact that there are challenges and issues and that perhaps, it isn't business as usual. Something needs to be done. Fires need to be put out. Processes need to be streamlined or reinvented.

In some cases, solving problems requires attention and energy. Sometimes a decision. Others the discovery and implementation of a new way of doing things. Whatever it is, why not you?

Action Item

→ *Identify problem areas within your sphere of influence. How can you step-up to create or execute on a solution?*

Show Leadership During Crisis: There are times in your career when your employer, business unit, team or boss will experience a crisis of some sort. (In fact, there is a good chance that this is happening right now.)

These crisis moments represent opportunity for you. I strongly believe that striding into the breach during crisis, change, turmoil and situations where workload exceeds capacity can be very smart career moves. If you respond to them correctly.

Certainly, like anywhere else in life, when you stick your nose out, it can get burned. And like everything else in life, "how" you do it is an important component in increasing the probability of success of the "what" you do. Sometimes it takes finesse not to step on toes.

Striding into the breach during crisis, change and turmoil is a smart career move

One of things that happen during crisis (and remember, a state of true crisis is typically short and intense) is that hierarchy blurs a bit. Cracks in the ceiling provide opportunities to get access to

more senior work. In fact, the beauty of the crisis (from a career development perspective) is that crisis calls for the attention of the higher ups and they might see you in action. Responding. Leading.

You might see a crisis today. Or one developing. Crisis often spring up over night (big customer threatens to take business to competition, product ships with bugs, natural disaster causes a major interruption in operations, or key team member gets sick and can't make the big client pitch).

How will you respond?

Show your Potential: If you aren't growing, you are at risk. Often, managers and HR are more likely to keep people who they are invested in and who they have plans for. Employees who are perceived to still be on their way up. This is not an overnight solution, but behaving in ways and demonstrating clear cut performance

One common weak area is around the leadership, coaching and development of people. You might be a performer in one aspect, but the organization might have issues with your people and leadership skills. Potential means having what it takes to grow into bigger leadership roles. The people side and leadership sides are non-negotiable.

Another requirement of more senior roles is your ability to communicate and interact with other department or business unit or functional heads. Again, this is often a stumbling block. When your job goes from becoming the business of your department to the business of the organization itself, a new set of behaviors are required.

Homework

Q. How is your potential currently viewed by your manager? Other higher-ups in the organization?

Q. What can you do to further demonstrate your potential?

Be a source of strength to coworkers: Whether you are in a leadership role or not, you have the opportunity to be a source of

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)

positive energy to your coworkers. During times like these, we need that kind of strength and leadership.

What if you aren't leading a team, unit or organization? It doesn't matter!

Stop trying to be successful. Instead, focus on the success of those around you.

This is great advice and in fact, really echoes many of the ideas already presented in previous pages.

Strategy: Give clients and employers more reasons to do business with you, not less

One of the natural things that happens during recession is cutting. Businesses cut costs. They scale back on value-added features or services. At an individual level, we also scale back and retreat, both in our professional and personal lives. Fear and uncertainty can distract from the big picture.

In times like these, what we really need is that extra effort. At an individual level, if you are cutting back from taking risks, stepping up to the plate, being a leader, and adding value, you are providing an excuse for decision makers to get rid of you if and when the time comes for layoffs. At the very least, you are not distinguishing yourself. And that is risky at any time.

When you give them reasons to keep you, you are safer. Obvious. But worth paying attention to.

Strategy: Expand your Relationship Base Across the Organization

If the only person who knows the good work you do is your immediate manager, you have a problem. Yes, sometimes your boss is our biggest champion. But more often than not, that isn't the case.

And your boss has their own career pressures. And their power within the organization is in flux.

There is not getting around the fact that you need profile and you need relationships in other parts of your organization. Peer relationships are excellent. But even better are the peers of your boss as well as a level higher than that.

Your goal is to have important, influential people in your organization think you are golden and one of their most valuable employees.

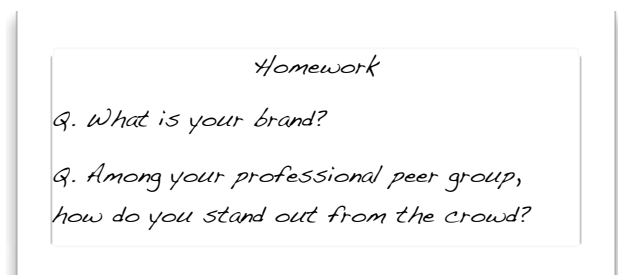
How to Increase Opportunities & Choice

Strategy: Get Bold

One strategy is to have the courage to develop your brand. The reason I mention courage is that very few senior professionals feel comfortable "limiting" themselves. To them, definition and branding equate with narrowing and limiting. And that sounds scary.

Remember trap 3b - going wide? This is exactly what happens. In scary times (although frankly this is a common trap at any time), people want to keep their options open and be interested and available for everything and anything. The problem is that doesn't work.

When you get bold, you carve out a position in your market and you work on enhancing and promoting it. Not only will this give you purpose and meaning, but it will also separate you from the vast majority of folks who go through the motions. And, speaking from personal experience, it is way more fun.



Strategy: Open up the conduits for people to find you

Let's think about the concept of push vs. pull. Is one better than the other? In the case of managing your career, I recommend that you need equal portions of both.

The average job search is focused on push. Push means forcing things to happen. You apply to jobs and approach targets and take the other necessary steps to find work. Those actions are important and when you get hit with a lay-off or you feel that cutbacks are imminent, you have no choice but to push, and push hard.

What is pull? Pull is about attraction. A book came out a year or two ago called **The Secret** and it garnered a lot of attention about this concept of attraction. Attraction really does work, but I am not recommending positive thinking. You generate pull by

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engaging in activities **over time** that create conduits and reasons for people to find and come after you with opportunities. Think of planting seeds. You are not sure which seed will end up being a strong tree, but you do know that if you plant the field, there will be trees that crop up.

Let's go back in time for a second to my days as an executive search person. One of the things that I noticed very early was there were many executives, from Directors to CEOs to Board Members who were fielding a regular stream of calls from headhunters, industry peers, investors and Board search committees. In fact, they had managed their career in a way that meant that they have never really had to engage in job search since landing their first job.

Would you like that same sort of opportunity stream?

It takes time and sustained activity to make that happen. Unless of course you can make news in a positive, compelling way in the short term. Who knows, the world may beat a path to your door.

While you work on the long term, you can get started now. Invest some of your time and attention in opening up those channels and conduits. Implement strategies to ensure that you end up on someone's call list when they have a need or asked to refer someone. That means networking as much as possible. Nurture your existing relationships and expand your network. Rather than haphazardly, build it strategically. Use selected online tools.

And FYI, these actions are going to be far more effective if you have a bit of a brand, something that demonstrates that rather than being a commodity, you have a unique offering in the market. When you are a commodity, it is hard to find you. When you have a focus and a brand, you jump to a more exclusive short-list of competitors, for those places that really need and get what you do and what you offer.

Action Items:

- ➔ *Get on LinkedIn and use it! Find other appropriate conduits and cultivate.*
- ➔ *Get to know a handful of executive recruiters*
- ➔ *Develop profile in your market (industry & local)*
- ➔ *Develop your referability*

Strategy: Cultivate Your Reference List

If there is ANY chance that you might intentionally, or unintentionally be on the job market in the next year (and even if you think not), do yourself a big favor and invest some time developing and updating your professional and personal reference list.

(This section could easily be labelled as a risk management To-Do, but there is also opportunity in your reference list.)

You have heard that business is about people and relationships. This is doubly important when it comes to your references. Sure, you can email a boss from 7 years ago out of the blue and he/she might help you out, but wouldn't it have been better to have maintained that relationship over time? Would the results be a bit better perhaps?

This is not only a smart move in terms of being prepared, but it will also highlight potential gaps in your reference list in advance of the critical moment.

In fact, ideally, I want you to look at your reference list as an opportunity, not a burden. What might it mean that someone is willing to be your reference? Obligation certainly. But in the rules-drive, litigious world we live in today, probably more than that. How can you help them? Working again with former colleagues in new environments is a tried and true method of progressing your career.

Action Items:

- ➔ *Retrieve your reference list or create one.*
- ➔ *Touch base with your references.*
- ➔ *Contact people who you think you would like to ask to be a reference.*
- ➔ *Show some interest in their life. The simple act of touching base, or pinging your references can go along way. "How are things? Can I help?"*
- ➔ *Update their current contact info while you are it.*

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)

Show some thought leadership this year

Thought leadership is the act of contributing to the intellectual evolution of your professional area or industry. But it might be as simple as championing a new process in your company and becoming the “guru” for that new (and hopefully important) area of knowledge.

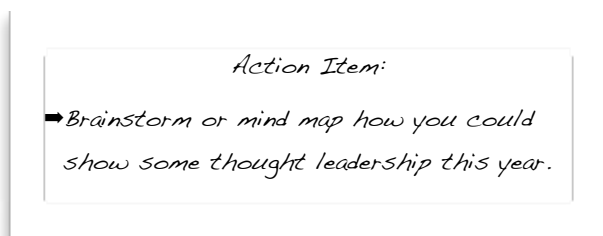
Being a thought leader is a powerful means of boosting your personal brand, profile and success.

I had dinner last week with a friend who holds a senior role in a large, multinational software corporate. He shared with me that he had decided to write a white paper on where he thinks the company should go and what it should do for a key market. And he sent it off to a bunch of very important people globally.

Unlike Jerry Maguire’s manifesto (which backfired), my friend’s white paper has produced a mini-flood of calls, congratulations and offers internationally to take on this new initiative. Smooth. Here are some ideas for you:

- ▶ Write a white paper
- ▶ Do a survey and publish the results
- ▶ Champion a new, important initiative
- ▶ Conduct and write-up an analysis
- ▶ Blog on your industry or do a podcast
- ▶ Pose provocative, future-based questions
- ▶ Present to small or large audiences
- ▶ Study, research, investigate so that you have the expertise

Of course, most of these will not be applicable to your situation. And, you need to have a level of confidence that your department, organization or market would welcome this sort of initiative.



Update your resume

Yes, I know, so obvious. But, I am suggesting more...

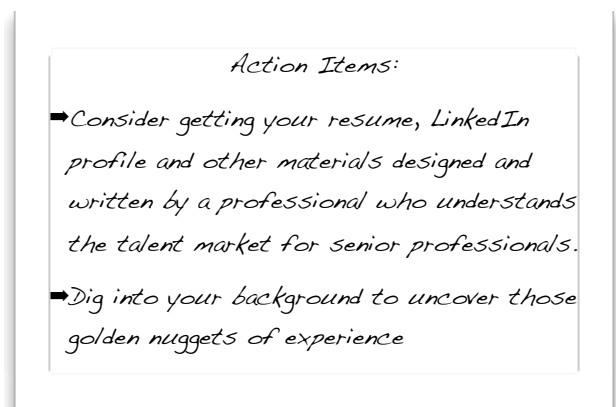
I recommend that anyone who has been in a job for more than 6 months should update their resume to include their current role. You never know who is going to call. Or what internal or external opportunities might come around. (Or, what negative surprise might await you one Monday AM.)

More strategically, the process of capturing what you have done and what you are currently working on is an important, ongoing career management imperative.

To do more than just dusting off your resume, consider...

- ▶ Getting a handle on your target market and how you want to brand yourself for this market
- ▶ Focusing on outcomes, the difference you have made rather than solely on duties and responsibilities
- ▶ Capturing your true professional strengths and putting them on the resume. Don't be shy
- ▶ Developing a summary pitch about what you offer and where you fit. You can't and shouldn't be all things to all employers, so don't try. Figure out what you do and do very well, and capture that.

It takes an investment of your time, but one that will pay off. Make it part of your to-do list to boost your career for 2009 and beyond.



Cultivate Those Relationships

Almost all of the good things that have happened to me in my career were a result of managing and cultivating relationships. Most people get jobs through people they know. Opportunities are usually created through networks. Your highest quality references are not obligation-driven but rather relationship-driven. Mentoring involves a relationship.

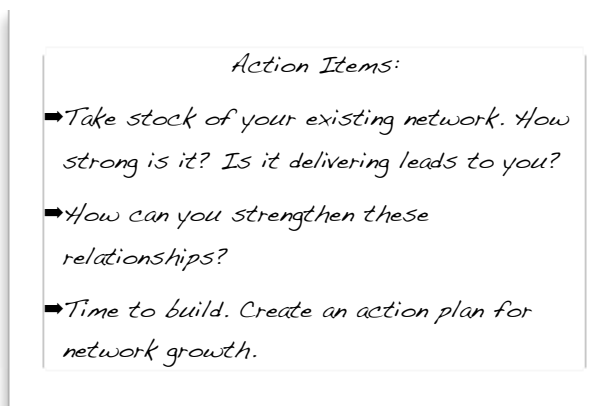
I noticed very useful behaviors when I worked in the high end executive search industry. Over the course of hundreds of executive searches, thousands of interviews and I don't how many phone calls talking to people in a never ending quest to find the best talent available for our search assignments, I saw some executives and managers behaving in ways that produced streams of opportunity for them.

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)

Yes, they were talented business people. But there was more. They had taken the time to develop and cultivate relationships with other good people, and the network exchanged information. It was that simple.

For most of us, our careers are not significantly impacted by hundreds of personal contacts. Usually, it is just a few key relationships that shape the course of our lives. Which relationships of course is the mystery. You need to plant a lot of seeds in order to get this benefit.

Next time you have the opportunity to meet or talk to someone, go out of your way to make an impression. Take an interest in your contact. Try and help them in some way. Following up with a timely, hand-written thank-you note will distinguish you from 99% of the crowd.



8 Ways to Respond Effectively When the Unavoidable Occurs

If the unfortunate has occurred or does occur, you need to respond strategically and massively.

However, the hard reality is that how you respond depends on your financial and emotional state when the lay-off occurs. For many, a lay-off was a predictable event, one they have been anticipating and preparing for. In these cases, it is time to crank up your search efforts with focus and confidence.

If you are totally blindsided and/or unprepared, your first step is to take stock. What is your cash position? Are you feeling strong and can see this as an opportunity to move into something better, or are you at a loss about what to do next? What kind of support can you get to help you through this? What do you have to do to ensure that you survive financially and emotionally?

In either situation, a strategic job search is in order. The full process is out of scope for this report, but here are 8 top level tips:

1. Breathe. Find your centre. You are a professional and there is a place for you out there. You will get through this.
2. Quickly gather your contacts and data, if possible, from your workplace. Put all of those contacts (address book, email inbox, cards, colleagues, customers, suppliers, etc.) into your own system.
3. Inventory your offering. Take the time to develop a sound understanding of abilities, skills, experience and fit. What are you interested in doing next? This includes really analyzing your professional background to identify stories, evidence and data to better market yourself and prove your candidacy.
4. Target. You are not equally valuable everywhere. Define A, B and C target groups. A is the perfect home for your offering. B is acceptable and C will pay the bills.
5. Cultivate Multiple Channels to find opportunities. By all means, use online job postings and apply. But this is only one channel to opportunity. Develop a multi-channel strategy and then invest your time accordingly.
6. Create channels for people to find you. LinkedIn is one great example. Ensure that your network knows what you are looking for so you are top of mind when they have an opportunity to make a referral.
7. Use Pareto's Principle (the 80/20 rule): Analyze your network for the people you know who are hubs of contacts and information. Who do you know who has the opportunity to hire or refer? Once you are ready, get in touch with them. And remember that actions that you are resisting doing are usually the most valuable, high impact things you can do.
8. Like getting out and talking to people. The worst place to conduct a job search is in your pajamas at your family computer. Fine, some things will happen there. But you must get out there. Every day.

There is a lot more to a strategic job search of course.



“What happens is not as important as how you react to what happens.”

-Thadeus Gollas

How to Manage Your Career in Scary Times (cont.)

SWOT Analysis

One of the first things an MBA student learns is a strategic analysis model called SWOT. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This model is normally used to analyze the strategic position of a company, product or situation, both internally and externally.

The model looks like a 2x2 table with strengths and weaknesses for the top 2 boxes, and opportunities and threats for the bottom two. The SWOT analysis can be a simple but powerful tool to analyze your own career situation, in particular, during times of economic uncertainty.

You have likely thought about your strengths and weaknesses. When you do, however, you are only looking internally. An internal view is important, but incomplete in that you manage your career in several external environments. Physical location, industry, company, and profession are the main ones. These environments bear heavily on the health and direction of your career.

The SWOT model adds an external dimension to the analysis with opportunities and threats relevant to you. Use the tool to:

- ▶ Validate your current position
- ▶ Understand what to emphasize and to work on, or stay away from
- ▶ Brainstorm on where you can or should go
- ▶ Highlight opportunities and your position relative to them
- ▶ Flag threats that you might need to deal with

1. Work through each of the four Analysis worksheets that follow. The more specific you can be, the more useful this tool will be in taking real actions to improve your career power.
2. Once you feel that you have really covered the analysis, start consolidating your ideas onto the SWOT Analysis Grid using brief bullet points. Go off the page if you run out of space.
3. Consolidate even further by highlighting the most insightful and critical and actionable observations you have made. (It might help to sleep on it and come back with a fresh perspective.)
4. Once you are complete, analyze what it means. What is your overall impression of your position?
5. Determine what actions you are committed to taking and what actions you might consider taking to:
 - ▶ Enhance a specific strength or add to the list
 - ▶ Minimize or eliminate a weakness
 - ▶ Pursue, or exploit an opportunity
 - ▶ Protect yourself from threats

Use the two pages that follow the SWOT Analysis Grid to write down specific strategies, corresponding actions, and resources you might need in order enhance or exploit a positive or minimize or eliminate a negative.

You don't need an MBA to benefit from the SWOT analysis. Use this tool periodically and you will have added a level of sophistication and effectiveness to your career planning.

Analyze Your Strengths

Strengths are your internal, positive attributes and selling points. They add value to your work. You have some degree of control over these.

Questions to help you Analyze Your Strengths	Possible Strengths
What are your strengths? Be as expansive as possible about your abilities and talents.	
Describe your personal assets.	
What core competencies do you have? How strong are they?	
What are you praised for? By colleagues, your manager, customers or friends and family?	
Inventory your technical skills: How strong is each relative to the market?	
Describe the nature, marketability and rarity of your specialized knowledge?	
In what kinds of situations do you excel?	
What other aspects of you add value to your job / work?	

Analyze Your Weaknesses

Weaknesses are your internal negative attributes. Again, you have some control over these.

Questions to help you Analyze Your Weaknesses	Possible Weaknesses
What can you improve upon?	
What do you do poorly?	
What should you avoid?	
What are your negative personal characteristics or poor work habits?	
Are there any important gaps in your experience or skill set relative to the kind of work you do?	
What are you hiding from others? What don't you want found out?	
In what kinds of situations do you not do well?	

Analyze Opportunities

Opportunities are those external possibilities over which you have no personal control, but you can potentially take advantage of.

Questions to help you Identify Opportunities	Possible Opportunities
Are industry trends working in your personal favor? Be specific.	
Is there an opportunity in demographic cycles and/or economic trends that you can exploit?	
Are you able to adapt to evolving industry or professional needs in a way that would provide opportunity for you?	
Where can you make a bigger difference currently?	
Is your organization entering a new area of facing a problem to which you could step-up and respond to?	
What is the power of your network? Are you contributing to and using your network?	
Do you have any key relationships, that if cultivated more, could turn into career or business opportunities for you?	
Are you spotting any specific career opportunities that you want to chase?	
Have you ignored opportunities in the past to which you might be able to revisit (headhunter calls, invitations, etc.)?	

Analyze Threats

Threats are external, potentially damaging factors over which you have no personal control. They may impact you personally and require you to take action to protect yourself.

Questions to help you Analyze Threats	Possible Threats
How is your organization weathering uncertain economic times?	
Are there any signs or clues that your current organization is in trouble?	
Are there any signs or clues that you personally might be at risk?	
Is your industry consolidating, in decline or being off-shored?	
Can others do what you do and deliver what you do at a lower cost? How significant is your value add?	
Describe your political position within your organization. Are you at risk?	
Is the organization you work for the only of its kind in your local area?	
How much demand is there for your skill sets? Are they being replaced by others?	
Are there changing professional standards for which you aren't certified or evolving technologies that you haven't adapted to?	
Where are you in the age and stage of your career? Are job searches more difficult as a result?	

SWOT Analysis Grid

Consolidate specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats onto this graph. Be selective and be precise.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Strategies to Enhance or Add Strengths

Strategy	Actions	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ ...▶ ...▶ ...	
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Strategies to Increase / Enhance Opportunity

Strategy	Actions	Resources
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Strategies to Minimize or Eliminate Weaknesses

Strategy	Actions	Resources
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Strategies to Eliminate Threats or Mitigate Risk

Strategy	Actions	Resources
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What we do

Ian Christie works 1-1 with individual clients, delivering job search and career transition strategy, process & support, resume development and interviewing strategy. And these services are additionally available in an outplacement relationship.

Ian also works 1-1 with individual clients on proactive career management strategies like building profile, developing a brand, preparing for a move, building a network and navigating key career decisions.

Ian delivers workshops and presentations on career management and career transition issues to groups and consults business school career centers.

If you are in need of professional, strategic career services, take advantage of the special, report reader's only, **Holiday Offer** below.

Coming January 2009

If my ideas resonated with you, then I encourage you to stay tuned for the launch of new offerings beginning in 2009.

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