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## Layoff? Game on

**Four key job-hunting steps will turn unemployment on its heels.**

Kevin Donlin

If you've been laid off or are facing the prospect of a job loss, you know how traumatic it feels. You can allow yourself a brief period to feel bad, weepy, angry – whatever. But successful job seekers are able to quickly recalibrate, harness their emotions and get back in the saddle. Here are four ways to get out there and compete for a new job, one of which will surprise you:

### 1) Answer the \$64,000 question: Why you?

Your biggest challenge in finding a new job may be credibility, according to Rick Maurer, author of "Why Don't You Want What I Want?" (Bard Press, 2002). "Why should I hire you when there are so many candidates with experience and credentials?" That's the question going through many employers' minds.

"My single best piece of advice is to put yourself in the shoes of the person who's hiring. What does the world look like through their eyes? What might they be afraid of if they hire you? Finding answers to these 'unasked' questions can lead to your next job," Maurer advises.

### 2) Build a "brag book"

Any job will require you to submit a resume that's clear, concise and focused on results. But don't stop there, according to Paul Richard DiModica, president of DigitalHatch, Inc., Peachtree City, Ga., a sales training and consulting firm. DiModica suggests you build a portfolio of what you've done on the job and then assemble it in a 3-ring binder to give to

employers.

What to include? Try awards, technology certifications, articles written about you and examples of your business successes.

This method has produced breakthrough results for years. The reason why is shockingly simple: very few job seekers take the time to put together a knockout brag book. But when you're laid off, time is something you definitely do have so make the most of it.

### 3) Network smart

When it comes to networking, the most effective and over-looked of job search techniques, it's crucial to first know what you want, according to Dr. Beverly Kaye, president of Scranton, Pa.-based Career Systems International.

"The starting point is having an objective – a clear sense of what job you are after. A scattered approach to networking will leave you with a pocketful of names and no clear plan of action," Kaye says.



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And be sure to observe the Golden Rule.

"All serious networking is reciprocal. People who devote time and energy to you deserve something in return, so you need to find ways to give back," Kaye suggests.

Make an effort to pay others back for networking help. Success in networking, and in life, is a two-way street.

4) Throw a book at them

Here's a surprising way to set yourself apart from other job seekers: mail a hardcover book to the employers you want an interview with, DiModica suggests.

"The business book you send, preferably a best-seller, should be based on the industry you want to work in. Inside the book, write: 'I saw this and thought you might find it intriguing,' then sign your name and telephone number. Call the recipient two days later, say that you're the person who sent the book and ask to meet for 20 minutes," DiModica advises.

Why can this work? Most recipients will feel a sense of obligation to you for the unexpected gift. Plus, it's the kind of creative tactic that can land interviews and job offers, especially if you carefully research the problems, opportunities and needs of the company you target, and then propose smart solutions during your 20-minute meeting.

Here's hoping these four tips help you recover quickly from a layoff and get hired doing work you love.

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